

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens

other names/site number Three Garden Village; BA-3266

2. Location

street & number 7003 Dunmanway not for publication N/A  
city or town Dundalk vicinity N/A  
state MD code 005 County Baltimore code 005 zip code 21222

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally.  
(☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

8-9-11  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain):

Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens (BA-3266)  
Name of Property

Baltimore County, MD  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
43	buildings
0	sites
0	structures
0	objects
43	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  
0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL REVIVAL

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK  
walls BRICK  
roof SYNTHETIC, SLATE  
other

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

POLITICS

### Period of Significance

1937-1942

### Significant Dates

1937

1940

1942

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Iser, Gustave W., architect

## Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation Sheet.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repositories: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Property

Baltimore County, MD  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 26 acres Baltimore East, MD quad

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 <u>18</u> Zone	<u>0369038</u> Easting	<u>4346776</u> Northing	2 <u>18</u> Zone	<u>0369210</u> Easting	<u>4346841</u> Northing
3 <u>18</u> Zone	<u>0369304</u> Easting	<u>4346569</u> Northing	4 <u>18</u> Zone	<u>0369132</u> Easting	<u>4346501</u> Northing
					<u>X</u> See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nick Kraus

organization Heritage Consulting Group. date August 8, 2011

street & number 15 West Highland Avenue telephone 215-248-1260

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19118

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Three Garden Village Limited Partnership

street & number 7003 Dunmanway telephone 410-288-1400

city or town Dundalk state MD zip code 21222

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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**Description Summary**

The Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens garden apartment complex is located in the unincorporated community of Dundalk, Baltimore County, Maryland. The complex is comprised of three historically interrelated groupings of garden apartments that occupy over 26 acres of land located to the south and east of downtown "old" Dundalk (NR 1983). The site is comprised of three garden apartment groupings originally known as: Dundalk, Liberty, and Cornwall Gardens, that were constructed between 1937 and 1942. The complex includes 30 two-story brick multi-family residential buildings (comprising 592 individual units) and 13 automobile garages designed in a simplified Colonial Revival style. The site features ample landscaped gardens and courts and minimal building coverage, as is typical of garden apartment-style developments.

**Setting:** The Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens complex is located 10 miles east of downtown Baltimore, MD within the unincorporated community of Dundalk, Baltimore County, MD. The complex is located to the south and east of Old Dundalk (NR 1983), which was developed during the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Dundalk Company as a company town for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Old Dundalk was designed as a Garden City community and features single-family homes with a central shopping area and town square. Adjacent to Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens is the Dundalk Elementary School to the north and west, post-war single-family detached housing to the north, Dundalk Middle School and post-war single-family attached homes to the east and single-family detached housing to the south. The surrounding neighborhood is fully developed and features tree-lined streets with paved sidewalks and residential properties setback from the street.

**Site:** The Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens were undertaken in three phases over a five-year period and occupy three separate tax parcels within the community of Dundalk. Each grouping contains site characteristics specific to the garden apartment development typology including: limited building coverage, large landscaped lawns and courts, low-rise residential buildings constructed at 90 degree angles to maximize natural light and ventilation and limited vehicular access. Developed under the auspices of the Federal Housing Authority's (FHA) Large-Scale Housing Division, each grouping was constructed to meet the 1930s design requirements of the FHA which embraced the principles of the garden style apartment complex.

Dundalk Gardens, the first grouping developed, is located directly south of the Dundalk Elementary School and is bound by: Dunmanway to the north, Liberty Parkway to the east, Mornington Road to the south and Dunran Road to the west. The complex features 10 multi-family residential buildings and 9 automobile garages set within a 12.21 acre site. The site is divided into two sections by the north-south running Dunmurry Road and additional access to the site is provided by Dunbrin Road which provides access to the garages on the west section of the site. Within the site, a majority of the land is utilized for landscaped courts and gardens with less than 30 percent of the site featuring

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building coverage. The buildings each consist of multiple apartment clusters that are interconnected at 90 degree angles to maximize the amount of natural light and ventilation received by each building. Along the perimeter of the site, the buildings are set back from the sidewalks and are accessible via concrete walkways. Within the interior of the site, the buildings are linked by pedestrian walkways located within the landscaped gardens.

Liberty Gardens, the second grouping completed, is located directly east of the Dundalk Elementary School and is bound by: Liberty Parkway to the west, Shipway to the north, the Cornwall Gardens complex to the east and Dunmanway to the south. The 7.17 acre site consists of 7 residential buildings and two automobile garages. The residential buildings are sited at 90 degree angles and form landscaped courtyards. The buildings are accessible via pedestrian walkways which provide access from the adjacent streets.

Cornwall Gardens, the final grouping completed, is located directly east of Liberty Gardens and is bound by: Shipway to the North, Yorkway to the east and Dunmanway to the south. The 6.83 acre site consists of 13 residential buildings and 2 automobile garages. The buildings are situated at 90 degree angles to create landscaped courtyards and have a site plan that is symmetrical to Liberty Gardens. The complex features three exterior courtyards and four interior courtyards and the residences are accessible from the adjacent streets via pedestrian walkways.

**Dundalk Gardens (Grouped clusters of 4 apartment units)**

Structure: The buildings in Dundalk Gardens feature brick wall construction and wood floor systems.

Exterior: Within Dundalk Gardens, all buildings are constructed of red brick. The two-story residential buildings are designed in a highly simplified Colonial Revival aesthetic with sparse ornamentation. Each apartment building is composed of multiple clusters which each containing groups of four apartments. For each apartment cluster, there is a central entrance pavilion which projects from the front elevation of the building. The one-story pavilions are constructed of wood and are clad in wood siding or modern vinyl siding. Each pavilion features three openings, with a large center opening providing access to the two first floor apartment entrances and the flanking openings providing access to the upper floor apartment entrances. Above each pavilion are paired one-light windows. In general, each building features a symmetrical window pattern, though each apartment cluster may not be symmetrical in its own right. Windows throughout the complex are modern 1/1 aluminum units. On the rear of each building, the upper floors contain wood and metal stairs that serve as secondary means of egress. Within Dundalk Gardens there are multiple roof configurations. A significant number of buildings feature asphalt shingled hipped roofs with brick pediments located above the entrance pavilions. In other locations, the buildings feature side gable roofs while a number of corner buildings feature flat roofs or slate clad hipped roofs.

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Interior: The interior of each apartment within Dundalk Gardens features nearly identical floor plans and finishes. At the second floor apartments, utilitarian wood stairs provide access from the first-floor entrance pavilion to the living rooms. The apartments throughout are either one or two bedroom units and feature full kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms and small hallways. Within the apartments the walls and ceilings are finished with unornamented plaster and gypsum board and are finished with simple wood baseboard and crown molding. The interior doors feature simple metal case molding while the windows have no trim. The floors are generally carpeted though some locations have exposed wood plank flooring. Within the kitchens and bathrooms the flooring is modern commercial tile. The kitchens and bathrooms throughout have been updated in previous renovation campaigns. The apartments are heated by radiant steam heat which utilizes radiators located within the units.

**Liberty Gardens (Townhouses)**

Structure: The buildings in Liberty Gardens feature brick construction and wood floor systems.

Exterior: Throughout Liberty Gardens the residential buildings are two-stories in height and constructed of red brick. Every building within the grouping has a side gabled roof with a number having brick gables with inset circular wood vents near the peak. Throughout the complex the buildings feature single and paired modern aluminum windows with 4/4 and 6/6 applied grids. Although the complex is composed of multi-unit apartment buildings, each apartment has an independent exterior entrance. The entrances throughout are generally paired although a limited number of apartment clusters have a combination of paired and singular entrances. Unlike Dundalk Gardens, the entrances are located at the plane of the main elevations. At the location of single apartment units, the entrances are located within ornamental wood surrounds with fluted wood pilasters that are topped with denticulated wood cornices and brick rowlock course headers. Where there are paired apartment units, the entrances feature similar wood surrounds and cornices that are either squared or arched. The arched openings feature segmental arched rowlock brick lintels. On the rear of each building, the treatments are similar to the primary elevations although each apartment unit has an individual entrance with no ornamentation.

Interior: Within Liberty Gardens, the residential units are two-story townhouses with living rooms and kitchens on the first floor and bedrooms and bathrooms on the second floor. The townhouses feature spartan interiors with unornamented plaster and gypsum board walls and ceilings and wood baseboard within the living room and bedrooms. At the rear of each living room is a wood stair with squared balusters and wood handrail which provides access to the second floor. Beneath the stair on the first floor, an arched opening provides access from the living room to the kitchen. The kitchens and bathrooms have been renovated throughout. Floor plans throughout Liberty Gardens are similar dependant upon the apartment's bedroom count.

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**Cornwall Gardens (Apartments with shared interior entrance lobbies and corridors)**

**Structure:** The buildings in Cornwall Gardens feature brick construction and wood floor systems.

**Exterior:** Cornwall Gardens features 13 two-story red brick garden apartment buildings. The buildings generally have gabled roofs though a limited number have flat roofs. Each building is divided into clusters which each containing four apartments. These clusters are visible from the exterior and each features a central entrance with symmetrical window arrangements. The entrances are modern double-leaf glazed doors set within ornamental Colonial Revival surrounds and the windows are modern aluminum units with 4/4 and 6/6 applied grids. On the rear of each cluster, the second floor apartments contain wood and metal porches and fire stairs while the first floor apartments have small concrete porches.

**Interior:** Each apartment building within Cornwall Gardens is separated into clusters of four apartments. Each cluster contains an interior public corridor which provides access to the apartments. Within the corridors the walls are unornamented plaster accented with wood chair rail and baseboard and wood door case molding. The two second floor units are accessible via a wood stair which features wood newel posts and turned balusters. Within the apartment units, the finishes are utilitarian and include unornamented plaster and gypsum board walls and ceilings finished with simple wood baseboard and door and window casing. The floors are carpeted in the living and bedrooms and finished with commercial tile in the kitchens and bathrooms. The kitchens and bathrooms have been renovated throughout.

**Integrity:** The buildings located within Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens retain integrity. Limited alterations including: the alteration of a limited number of roofs, replacement of the windows and upgrading of the kitchens and bathrooms, have not significantly changed the buildings or removed character defining materials, and the buildings and landscaped site continue to convey the prototypical design of early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century garden apartment complexes.



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**Significance Summary**

The Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens complex, located at 7003 Dunmanway in Dundalk, Baltimore County, Maryland, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT and POLITICS. The resource comprises 30 brick two-story garden apartment buildings (incorporating 592 individual units) and 13 detached garage structures constructed between 1937 and 1942. The buildings and structures are located within a 26-acre site landscaped with sprawling lawns and gardens and a series of pathways that link the buildings.

The Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens complex is significant under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development as a response to the housing shortage in Dundalk in the mid-to-late 1930s created by the influx of workers attracted to the city's growing manufacturing base and available jobs during the Great Depression. The development responded to Dundalk's advanced economic recovery due to its nearby industries and the need for rental housing as the area was previously developed for owner-occupied housing which was not affordable to workers during the Great Depression.

The Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens complex is also significant under Criterion A for Politics as the first large-scale housing project in Dundalk to utilize the Federal government's New Deal era housing programs to create quality, affordable rental housing. The Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens project was developed as three separate garden apartment complexes that were financed by federally insured mortgages. The projects were approved by the federal Rental Housing Division (RHD) which was established in 1935 to administer the Federal Housing Authority's (FHA) large-scale rental housing program and the Section 207 mortgage insurance program. The RHD was integral in the advancement of the garden apartment complex design typology as it embraced by the English Garden City design principles that were championed by the highly influential Regional Planning Association of America led by architect Clarence Stein and landscape architect Henry Wright. The level of significance for the Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens complex is local and the period of significance extends from the original date of construction in 1937 through the completion of the construction in 1942.

**Early Development of Dundalk**

The unincorporated community of Dundalk, Maryland was primarily rural and agricultural until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Little development occurred in Dundalk until the Maryland Steel Company established a steel plant and shipyard at nearby Sparrows Point in 1887.<sup>1</sup> The steel

<sup>1</sup> Young, Donald S. "Reviews." Rev. of *The Blast Furnaces of Sparrow Point: One Hundred Years of Ironmaking on Chesapeake Bay*. *The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology* 2005. History Cooperative. Web. <[www.historycooperative.org/journals/sia/31.2/br\\_5.html](http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/sia/31.2/br_5.html)>.

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plant provided the impetus for local landowners to begin parceling their property. The first community created to serve the burgeoning population of steel workers was St. Helena, located directly north of Sparrows Point and to the southwest of Dundalk. St. Helena was subdivided utilizing a traditional gridiron layout and its housing stock was stratified by social class.<sup>2</sup>

In 1916, the Maryland Steel Company was acquired by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation which took control of the Sparrows Point steel manufacturing and shipyard facilities. In anticipation of major growth at the facility and a shortage of available housing, Bethlehem Steel formed the Dundalk Company in 1916 to construct employee housing. The Dundalk Company purchased nearly 1,000 acres of property in Dundalk and retained local architect Edward L. Palmer to develop a plan for the town. Palmer, following the tenets of the Garden City ideal, subdivided the property utilizing curvilinear streets with spacious green areas and landscapes. Although planned as a company town, Dundalk was thrust into the First World War effort in 1918 when the United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation (EFC) entered into an agreement with the Liberty Housing Company, another Bethlehem Steel subsidiary, to construct housing for the Sparrows Point workers. In Dundalk, the EFC developed 531 houses and a community center between 1917 and 1920. Following the war, the Dundalk Company became the primary developer of Dundalk and further developed the town center and its residential streets under the guidance of Edward Palmer. Under the direction of Palmer the section of Dundalk developed by the EFC and Dundalk Company, known as Old Dundalk (NR 1983), was populated with a mixture of attached houses, semi-detached houses and detached houses utilizing Period Revival motifs. At the center of Old Dundalk, the Dundalk Company constructed a community center which included: churches, shops, offices, a public park and a school.<sup>3</sup>

In 1928, the Dundalk Company released a plat map for the entire community of Dundalk, much of which was still utilized for agriculture at the time. The plat map illustrated the company's plan to create single-family housing throughout the community including the parcels of land eventually developed as Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens.<sup>4</sup> A substantial amount of housing was developed by the Dundalk Company between 1924 and 1929 when the development of new housing was halted by the Great Depression. Ultimately, changing demographics, economic realities and World War II brought an end to the Dundalk Company's Garden City development.

As the country slowly recovered from the Great Depression in the mid-1930s, Bethlehem Steel and the adjacent industrial corporations retooled to meet the demands of New Deal building programs and later war preparations. The growth of the local industries and associated demand

<sup>2</sup> Rhees, Suzanne S. "Dundalk, Maryland." *Land Development* 11.2 (1998): 38-40.

<sup>3</sup> Null, Druscilla. "Dundalk Historic District - BA-2213." *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. July 1983.

<sup>4</sup> Roland Park Company. "Dundalk: A Development of the Dundalk Company." Map. 1928.



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for workers led to a transition in housing development in Dundalk from single-family owned housing to affordable rental housing for industrial workers.<sup>5</sup>

**The Great Depression's Effect on Dundalk**

*Bethlehem Steel: Prosperity and Despair:* While wholly residential, the community of Dundalk's economic lifeblood during the 1920s included the nearby factories of the Western Electric Company, Chevrolet Motor Company, Crown Cork & Seal and most importantly, Bethlehem Steel Corporation, located at nearby Sparrows Point. The growth of the nearby plants echoed the booming industrial economy in greater Baltimore which attracted 103 new manufacturing plants during the 1920s.

Following Bethlehem Steel Corporation's purchase of the Sparrows Point complex in 1916, plant production boomed during the First World War and an ambitious \$100 million expansion was undertaken throughout the 1920s.<sup>6</sup> In 1916, Sparrows Point produced 35,000 tons of steel rail per month, though by 1928 this total had increased to 115,000 tons per month. Existing departments were expanded and new mills including the rod and wire mill and pipe mill were established during the mid-to-late 1920s.<sup>7</sup> Commensurate with the growth in production was an increase in workers at the factory. From a wartime peak daily employment of 12,000, Sparrows Point employed over 18,000 daily workers in 1929 including 6,000 African American laborers.<sup>8</sup> These workers fueled the growth of neighboring residential communities including: Dundalk, St. Helena and Turners Point.

The economic expansion of the 1920s came to a screeching halt in October 1929 with the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression. Although it was soon to become the most devastating economic crash in the history of the United States, many industry leaders, including Bethlehem Steel president Charles Schwab, believe the economic downturn was merely "an adjustment" and that prosperity would continue. For the remaining months of 1929 Schwab appeared to be correct as production at Sparrows Point remained at capacity and expansion continued with the commissioning of the Number 3 open hearth furnace.<sup>9</sup>

The collapse of Bethlehem Steel's business, and specifically production at Sparrows Point, began in the second quarter of 1930. Steel production at Sparrows Point slipped to 72 percent of

<sup>5</sup> *Dundalk City Directory*. 1945-1946: 135.

<sup>6</sup> Argersinger, Jo Ann E. *Making the Amalgamated: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Baltimore Clothing Industry, 1899-1939*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1999: 2.

<sup>7</sup> Reutter, Mark. *Sparrows Point: Making Steel: the Rise and Ruin of American Industrial Might*. New York: Summit, 1988: 176.

<sup>8</sup> Reutter 178, 181.

<sup>9</sup> Reutter 189.

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capacity by April 1930 and 69 percent by May.<sup>10</sup> By 1931, Bethlehem Steel was hemorrhaging red ink at Sparrows Point as the plant had fallen victim to sharply reduced demand, production overcapacity and a self-destructive business model which was profitable only when production lines operated at full capacity. In 1931, "two-thirds of Bethlehem's automobile sheet and engine market vanished by the end of the year," structural steel sales dropped 32 percent and Sparrows Point was forced to shutter both its 110-inch plate mill and rail mill.<sup>11</sup> On September 30, 1931, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation posted its first quarterly deficit since 1909.<sup>12</sup>

*No Parade of statistics is needed to emphasize that 1932 was the most disastrous year in the history of the American iron and steel industry. – Iron Age: January 5, 1933.*

Behind every drop in production and mill closing at Sparrows Point was a human tragedy. As a basic commodity supplier, the steel industry fell victim to the slowdown of industries up the supply chain such as automobile manufacturers and canned food suppliers. While residents in Dundalk also worked at Western Electric and Chevrolet, Sparrows Point was the area's major employer and its faltering proved a significant blow to the community. As the steel industry faltered, U.S. Steel Corporation and Bethlehem Steel Corporation cut hourly pay across the board 10 percent in October 1931.<sup>13</sup> At Sparrows Point, Bethlehem Steel instituted a "share-the-work" policy which divided hours of labor amongst the workers based on incoming orders with the effect of turning the majority of workers into part-time employees.<sup>14</sup>

The work sharing policy forced workers into accepting wages that were less than half of what they earned in the 1920s, and even this could not save the Plant's bottom line. By March 1933, greater than 1,200 employees had been discharged at Sparrows Point and the plant, which had employed 18,000 daily workers in 1929, was now employing a mere 3,500 at significantly reduced wages.<sup>15</sup> The reduced income and layoffs produced a direct and dire effect on the community of Dundalk:

*On the water-fringed plains of Baltimore Harbor one could see a whole industrial landscape laid bare: between Sparrows Point and Baltimore City almost everyone was dependent in one way or another on steel. When steel was disabled, grocers on Dundalk Avenue sold less food; when paychecks of 18,000 steelworkers dried up, fewer families could meet their monthly*

<sup>10</sup> Reutter 195.

<sup>11</sup> Reutter 205.

<sup>12</sup> Reutter 205.

<sup>13</sup> Reutter 205.

<sup>14</sup> Reutter 211.

<sup>15</sup> Argersinger 143., Reutter 223.

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*house mortgages and greater numbers crowded into  
apartments.<sup>16</sup>*

*Bethlehem Steel: Recovery:* Following two years of inaction, the United States Congress and President Herbert Hoover enacted legislation that established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) on February 2, 1932. Funded through the Treasury, the RFC was authorized to make emergency loans to financial institutions, insurance companies, railroads and for crop loans.<sup>17</sup> The RFC had little effect on the steel industry as it was unable to stimulate the economy and demand for steel products was not increased.

The catalyst for the recovery of Sparrows Point would not occur until after the inauguration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933. During Roosevelt's first year in office, the administration claimed unprecedented executive power to enact federal economic stimulus programs known collectively as the "New Deal." The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) was enacted by Congress in June 1933 in order to remedy prices and labor issues. Independently, the National Recovery Administration (NRA) was created via executive order to "to make voluntary agreements dealing with hours of work, rates of pay, and the fixing of prices."<sup>18</sup> In the summer of 1933, "Code of Fair Competition for the Iron and Steel Industry" was ratified by the NRA and American Iron and Steel Institute.<sup>19</sup> The Steel Code established a 40-hour work week, provided a 15 percent wage hike for employees and established regional prices for basic and semi-finished steel products. Although the Steel industry abhorred providing concessions to labor, it viewed the Steel Code as a means to return prosperity to the industry.

Of more importance to the recovery of the steel industry was Title II of the NIRA which created the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, better known as the Public Works Administration (PWA). Title II allotted \$3.3 billion for public works, including "loans to U.S. railroads for 840,000 tons of rails and 235,000 tons of fastenings in order to rebuild maintenance-deferred rights of way and enhance employment."<sup>20</sup> Throughout the country, only four steel manufacturers retained rail mills; including Bethlehem Steel's Sparrows Point facility.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Reutter 210-211.

<sup>17</sup> Butkiewicz, James. "Reconstruction Finance Corporation." *EH.Net | Economic History Services*. Ed. Charles Whaples. Economic History Association, 19 July 2002. Web. 14 Sept. 2010.  
<<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/butkiewicz.finance.corp.reconstruction>>.

<sup>18</sup> "Our Documents - National Industrial Recovery Act (1933)." *Www.OurDocuments.gov*. United States National Archive and Records Administration. Web. 14 Sept. 2010.  
<<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=66>>.

<sup>19</sup> Cheape, Charles. "Tradition, Innovation, and Expertise: Writing the Steel Code for the National Recovery Administration." *Business and Economic History* 25.2 (1996): 80.

<sup>20</sup> Reutter 240.

<sup>21</sup> Reutter 240.

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By November 1933, the four rail manufacturers and President Roosevelt had agreed to a price of \$36.37 ½ per ton of steel rail and the PWA allotted \$51 million for its purchase. The PWA also provided the Pennsylvania railroad with \$84 million to complete its Northeast electrification program with the railroad agreeing to purchases 100,000 tons of rail with its own funds. The Pennsylvania Railroad order, and by proxy the PWA funding, rescued the Bethlehem Steel Corporation from near insolvency, and allowed Sparrows Point to resume significant production. The plant supplied steel rails, sheeting, and plating to the Pennsylvania Railroad and production returned to 55 percent of capacity at the end of 1933, up miraculously from 18 percent at the beginning of the year.<sup>22</sup>

Although Sparrows Point was spared, economic recovery remained tepid during the mid-1930s and daily employment levels never exceeded 12,000, well below the peak of 18,000 in 1929.<sup>23</sup> Production at Sparrows Point ramped up throughout the late 1930s, fueled by orders, ironically from Japan, and slowly recovering American industries. Sparrows Point finally regained full production at the onset of World War II. Just two months prior to Pearl Harbor, in October 1941, the federal government entered into a contract to increase steel making capacity at Bethlehem Steel's plants, with the majority funneled to Sparrows Point. Over \$20 million was spent constructing "a seventh blast furnace, 61 coke ovens equipped to extract benzene and other war-essential coke chemicals, an electrolytic tinning line, and three new 200-ton open hearths."<sup>24</sup>

*Population Growth and Unemployment in the Baltimore Region:* During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population in the Baltimore region, including the City of Baltimore and the adjacent areas in Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties, grew significantly. In 1920, the first census following Baltimore City's annexation of land within the adjacent counties, the city population was 733,826 and the Baltimore County population was 74,817. By 1930, the population of the City was over 800,000 and the population of the County was over 120,000 and by 1940 it was 859,000 and 155,000 respectively.<sup>25</sup> During this period, the population of the region of Baltimore County that encompassed Dundalk grew significantly as well, buoyed by the available jobs at the nearby manufacturing plants. Census district 12 which encompassed the Fairlawn-Dundalk-St. Helena region of Baltimore County, grew in population from 4,162 in 1920 to 11,556 in 1930 and 13,019 in 1940 (Figure 1).

Although regional population grew continuously from 1920 – 1940, the region was hard hit by the Great Depression, following a decade of significant economic growth and prosperity. Prior to

<sup>22</sup> Reutter 241.

<sup>23</sup> Reutter 242.

<sup>24</sup> Reutter 304.

<sup>25</sup> United States. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Census of the United States: 1920, 1930, 1940. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1922, 1932, 1942.



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the stock market crash in October 1929, Baltimore City had already been hit by an economic slowdown in 1928 when the unemployment rate reached 10 percent, though this improved slightly in 1929.<sup>26</sup> Following the onset of the Great Depression, the Baltimore Metropolitan District, specifically the City and adjacent industrial regions of Baltimore and Anne Arundel counties, was heavily impacted due to its high concentration of industry. Baltimore's industrial might, which led to the boom years of the Roaring 20s, led to an equivalent hardship as the economy foundered during the 1930s and the industries were forced to drastically reduce costs to survive.

Within the city of Baltimore and adjacent urbanized areas, including Dundalk, the unemployment rates throughout the 1930s nearly matched the national average, which reached a maximum of 25 percent in 1933.<sup>27</sup> In late 1930, Baltimore's unemployment rate was at 11 percent and steadily grew to over 20 percent in September 1933.<sup>28</sup> The Great Depression had a significant effect on Dundalk due to its position as a residential community for employees of the nearby industries, most notably the Bethlehem Steel Corporation complex at nearby Sparrows Point.

*The effects of joblessness and hardship in the Great Depression...were not shared evenly among the city's 362,072 gainful workers. Particularly hard hit were workers in textiles, steel, clothing and construction.*<sup>29</sup>

*In this connection Mr. Cole said that "unemployment registration in Baltimore city and Baltimore county is steadily increasing... the registration in Baltimore county is about 5,000 and conservatively twenty percent of that number come from the Dundalk section and within a two-mile radius of Dundalk."*<sup>30</sup>

Although unemployment in the country and region peaked in 1933, the economy did not fully recover until the onset of World War II. The New Deal era federal spending programs did increase demand for steel and resuscitated Bethlehem Steel as previously discussed, but did not provide a permanent solution to the country's economic morass and unemployment figures remained elevated. In the Baltimore region, the unemployment rate decreased to 15 percent in

<sup>26</sup> Argersinger 3.

<sup>27</sup> Smiley, Gene. "Great Depression." *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. 2008. Library of Economics and Liberty. 14 September 2010. <<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/GreatDepression.html>>.

<sup>28</sup> Argersinger 7, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Argersinger 8.

<sup>30</sup> "Housing Project at Dundalk Urged." *The Baltimore Sun*. 14 Dec. 1933.

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1938 which was slightly less than the national rate of 19 percent.<sup>31</sup> Baltimore's economic recovery prior to the war continued to surpass the national average through 1940 when its unemployment rate fell to 8.4 percent, nearly six points less than the remainder of the country.<sup>32</sup> The economic recovery for Dundalk surpassed that of the region as the unemployment rate dipped to only 3.6 percent of eligible male workers in 1940; of the 5200 employed male workers in the Dundalk region (District 12 of the United States Census) 56 percent were employed in the steel industry.

**Regional Housing in Baltimore in the 1930s**

Prior to the onset of the Great Depression, Baltimore was known as a "city of homes" where homeownership was greater than 50 percent.<sup>33</sup> Although home ownership was high, the quality of homes was not equivalent, and many homes were old and outdated and considered "slums" at the time. During the mid-late 1920s, 6,000 homes were being constructed annually with construction contracts topping \$50 million.<sup>34</sup> In Dundalk, all property was controlled by the Dundalk Company, a subsidiary of Bethlehem Steel Corporation, and the entire community was platted for single-family home ownership (Figure 2).

Following the onset of the Great Depression in October 1929, home construction in the region fell precipitously with only 119 new houses constructed in Baltimore in 1934.<sup>35</sup> The drop in housing construction belied the growing demand for quality affordable housing in the region. Following the establishment of the Public Works Administration (PWA) Housing Division in June 1933, PWA studies exposed the underside of housing in Baltimore city. One report indicated that downtown Baltimore "*was almost completely girdled with a belt of poverty, which, unless rehabilitated, will remain an increasingly serious menace to all properties inside and outside of this ring.*"<sup>36</sup>

Much of the affordable housing stock was found within "a ring of blighted residential tracts of the most serious importance and size"<sup>37</sup> and there was little incentive for private developers to improve the conditions. Furthermore, Baltimore's Mayor Howard Jackson, in conjunction with

<sup>31</sup> Argersinger 54., VanGiezen, Robert, and Albert E. Schwenk. "Compensation from before World War I through the Great Depression." *Compensation and Working Conditions Online*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 30 Jan. 2003. Web. 14 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.bls.gov/opub/cwc/cm20030124ar03p1.htm>>.

<sup>32</sup> VanGiezen, Robert, and Albert E. Schwenk. "Compensation from before World War I through the Great Depression." *Compensation and Working Conditions Online*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 30 Jan. 2003. Web. 14 Sept. 2010. <<http://www.bls.gov/opub/cwc/cm20030124ar03p1.htm>>.

<sup>33</sup> Argersinger 94.

<sup>34</sup> Argersinger 94.

<sup>35</sup> Argersinger 8.

<sup>36</sup> Argersinger 94.

<sup>37</sup> Argersinger 94.



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the city's Real Estate Board and members of the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission, rallied against the PWA's proposal to build two affordable housing projects in the city due to their effect on property values and private real estate interests. Although slum clearance and quality affordable housing was drastically demanded by the citizenry, no PWA sponsored housing was constructed in the city of Baltimore and new single-family homes, even with Federal Housing Authority (FHA) backed mortgages, were few and far between. Unlike other cities which utilized the PWA and later United States Housing Authority programs to eliminate slums and create new affordable housing, Baltimore did not construct its first public housing until 1939 and was significantly delayed in its efforts to combat affordable housing shortages.<sup>38</sup>

In Dundalk, the Dundalk Company completed the infrastructure required for the proposed single-family developments, but all construction activities were halted in 1929. Layoffs and reduced wages for Bethlehem Steel employees devastated the regional housing market from Turner's Point north to East Baltimore as: "*Around the bungalow belt of Edgewater and Saint Helena For Rent signs were hung, while among the row houses of East Baltimore repossession agents stalked relentlessly with their bank papers and moving trucks.*"<sup>39</sup>

No longer could Bethlehem Steel workers afford to purchase homes in Dundalk, and housing demand transitioned to affordable rental units. Although thousands of workers had been laid off or lost wages, demand for housing remained in Dundalk and additional demand was added with the construction of the nearby General Motors plant in 1934. Demand for housing in Dundalk continued to grow during the mid-to-late 1930s as Bethlehem Steel and nearby industries including the Western Electric Company, Crown Cork and Seal and the Glenn L. Martin aircraft factory rehired and the population of the area increased significantly. This growth in jobs transitioned the housing demand from projects to provide work and housing for unemployed laborers, to housing necessary for the growth of the adjacent factories.

*Recent increases in the wage scales of the factories and industries in the Sparrows Point area and the addition of many workers to the pay rolls of the concerns operating in the district, with several new mills now being added, have greatly stimulated the erection of dwellings, stores and apartments.*<sup>40</sup>

**CRITERION A: SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMUNITY PLANNING AND  
DEVELOPMENT/POLITICS**

<sup>38</sup> Argersinger 205.

<sup>39</sup> Reutter 210.

<sup>40</sup> Watmough, W.N. "Housing - Two New Plans for Low-Rent Homes." *The Baltimore Sun* 11 July 1937: SO4.

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Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens is significant under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development as a response to the housing shortage in Dundalk in the mid-to-late 1930s created by the influx of workers attracted to the city's growing manufacturing base and available jobs during the Great Depression. The development responded to Dundalk's advanced economic recovery due to its nearby industries and the need for rental housing as the area was previously developed for owner-occupied housing which was not affordable to workers during the Great Depression.

Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens is also significant under Criterion A for Politics as the first large-scale housing project in Dundalk to utilize the Federal government's New Deal era housing programs to create quality, affordable rental housing. The Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens project was developed as three separate garden apartment complexes that were financed by federally insured mortgages. The projects were approved by the federal Rental Housing Division (RHD) which was established in 1935 to administer the Federal Housing Authority's (FHA) large-scale rental housing program and the Section 207 mortgage insurance program. The RHD was integral in the advancement of the garden apartment complex design typology as it embraced by the English Garden City design principles that were championed by the highly influential Regional Planning Association of America led by architect Clarence Stein and landscape architect Henry Wright.

**Garden Apartment Planning and the RPAA**

Between 1934 and 1940, 240 multi-family rental housing complexes received FHA insured mortgages; of these projects, 200 were garden apartment projects.<sup>41</sup> Although not specifically defined in PWA or FHA regulations, the garden apartment became the most utilized typology of multiple-family housing during the decades of the 1930s and 1940s as a result of the architects who worked for the federal agencies at this time, and their embrace of "modern" design principles which were incorporated into project design requirements.

The progenitor of the garden apartment concept was the Garden City movement which has been attributed to Ebenezer Howard's 1898 book *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. In his tome, Howard described the deteriorating and overpopulated conditions of the city and introduced his ideal city as "a series of concentric circles devoted to bands of houses and gardens for residents of mixed income and occupations."<sup>42</sup> The Garden City concept was first realized at Letchworth, a garden suburb located north of London that was developed in 1902. Letchworth was developed as a working-class suburban neighborhood which utilized a comprehensively planned architecture and landscape design. Howard emphasized the need for fully planned

<sup>41</sup> "Garden Apartments," *The Architectural Forum*, Volume 72, Number 5, May 1940, p. 309.

<sup>42</sup> McClelland, Linda F., David L. Ames, and Sarah D. Pope. "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960." *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*. Dec. 2004: E18.

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communities to remedy the “unhealthy” urban entanglement which affected urban areas at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Garden City concept embraced the development of healthy environments by planning landscapes and buildings that provided its residents ample amounts of open space, fresh air and sunlight; in contrast to orthodox urban environments which maximized land coverage and afforded residents little green space or natural sunlight.

In the United States, the Garden City concept was embraced in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by young architects and planners who studied Ebenezer Howard’s writings and traveled to Europe to observe the planned suburban communities being developed. Although the Garden City concept revolved around single-family housing, housing reformers looked to Howard’s principles as a solution for America’s affordable housing shortage during the 1920s. In 1923, the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) was formed by a consortium of architects and planners including: Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, Lewis Mumford and Catherine Bauer. The RPAA promoted Garden City principles as a solution to America’s housing shortage with a focus on creating communities of lower density and maximum communal space and sought to create a fundamental shift in how communities were developed in the United States.<sup>43</sup>

During its pinnacle of influence between 1923 and 1935, the RPAA was highly successful in its goal of altering the American residential planning paradigm. Beyond raising awareness of the Garden City movement, members of the RPAA executed two demonstration communities which would propel them into influential positions within the newly formed Housing Division of the Public Works Administration and, later, the Rental Housing Division of the Federal Housing Authority.

The RPAA developed Garden City demonstration projects at Sunnyside Gardens in Queens, New York (1924-1928) and Radburn, New Jersey (1928-1933). The projects were chiefly designed by architect Clarence Stein and landscape architect Henry Wright and were developed by the limited-dividend City Housing Corporation which was established by RPAA president Alexander Bing, a successful Manhattan real estate developer and confidant of Stein.<sup>44</sup> The plans for Sunnyside Gardens and Radburn adapted the English Garden City concept to embrace America’s burgeoning automobile culture. Sunnyside Gardens was developed utilizing low-rise multi-unit residences intended for low to moderate income tenants while Radburn was developed as single-family detached housing for higher income residents. Both developments were constructed on large superblocks and featured minimal built land coverage with a majority of each site landscaped communal space. Both projects featured connecting pedestrian pathways and

<sup>43</sup> Longstreth, Richard W., ed. *Housing Washington: Two Centuries of Residential Development and Planning in the National Capitol [sic] Area*. 1st ed. Chicago, IL: Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2010: 165.

<sup>44</sup> Ward, Stephen V. *The Garden City: Past, Present, and Future*. 1st ed. Oxford: Alexandrine, 1992: 130.

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amenities within the community and vehicular traffic segregated to the exterior. The projects were the first two successful Garden City communities constructed in the United States.

Stein and Wright further refined the Garden City concept as a solution to the low and middle-income housing issue at Chatham Village in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1929. Chatham Village, undertaken by the philanthropic Buhl Foundation, was planned and developed utilizing groups of attached low-rise multi-family housing located within a natural setting. The development featured landscaped garden courts and curvilinear streets with vehicular traffic segregated to the exterior of the development and pedestrian access provided by landscaped paths on the interior of the housing blocks. When developed, Chatham Village was acclaimed for its innovative Garden City design and became a model for the large-scale garden apartment complexes constructed during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>45</sup> Chatham Village was viewed as the most direct model for the FHA's rental housing division garden complexes that were constructed beginning in 1935.<sup>46</sup>

### **Garden Apartment Design Features**

As a property typology, the garden apartment is characterized by a matrix of Garden City design principles tailored to provide healthy and affordable housing for low and middle-class occupants unable to afford owner-occupied housing. Garden apartment complexes are generally composed of interconnected low-rise multiple-unit residential buildings located within landscaped sites. Each building would contain multiple units and could be arranged as town homes with individual entrances or apartments with shared entrances. Buildings within garden apartment complex were sited at 90 degree angles to maximize the amount of natural light and ventilation received by each apartment unit. Garden apartment complexes were most poignantly defined by their landscaped site plans which feature spacious courts and landscaped lawns. Unlike traditional residential developments, garden apartment complexes were generally design with an inward emphasis, with landscaped paths, playgrounds and service buildings located within the residential blocks and vehicular traffic restricted to the periphery. The garden apartments typology provided a high-density living environment within a low-density landscape.

### **New Deal Housing Initiatives**

Homeownership Prior to the Great Depression: Although shortages and substandard housing conditions were typical in the United States in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to the Industrial Revolution and the associated migration to the country's urban centers, the onset of the Great Depression both increased the scale of the housing crisis and provided reformers and politicians the opportunity to address the issue. Prior to the 1930s, home ownership was generally out of reach for most Americans living in the country's urban centers. Unlike today's

<sup>45</sup> McClelland, Linda F., David L. Ames, and Sarah D. Pope E21.

<sup>46</sup> Longstreth 165.



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liberalized mortgage lending policies, only 1/3 of non-farm owner-occupied homes were purchased utilizing mortgages in 1910.<sup>47</sup> At that time, mortgages were supplied by mortgage bankers and savings and loan companies. Home mortgages of the era were generally short-term with periods of three to five years and were generally no more than 50% of the value of the property; forcing home buyers to provide large down payments. The loans generally required a balloon payment of the principal at the close of the loan and homeowners were often forced to obtain additional mortgages.<sup>48</sup>

Concurrently, low and middle-income workers living in America's urban centers who could not afford to purchase homes were often stuck living in substandard rental housing. Although certain municipalities enacted laws intended to provide decent housing to workers, local and state governments were unable to effectively influence inner-city housing markets.

The lack of decent affordable housing and the unfavorable mortgage market merged into a full-fledged housing crisis in 1929 with the onset of the Great Depression. Following the stock market crash, the construction of new housing dropped 90 percent by 1933; a year in which over 270,000 home mortgages were in default. Low cost "slum" housing in America's urban centers, already overpopulated with industrial workers, became even more overcrowded as displaced homeowners and unemployed workers searched for affordable housing.<sup>49</sup> The increase in demand provided little incentive for property owners to improve their housing stock and few developers constructed new housing during this period best known for its "Hooverville" shantytowns named in reference to United States President Herbert Hoover (1929-1933).

Although President Hoover's reaction to the Great Depression was best described as "inaction," Hoover did attempt to address the housing issues. On July 21, 1932, the federal Emergency Relief and Construction Act was signed into law and established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). The following day, the federal Home Loan Bank Board was established under the Home Loan Bank Act. The RFC was authorized to make loans to private corporations for low-income housing while the Home Loan Bank Board was established to "make advances on the security of home mortgages" and to fund and regulate Savings & Loan banks in order to finance home mortgages.<sup>50</sup> Although well intentioned, the programs had little effect on the

<sup>47</sup> Slivinski, Stephen. "House Bias: The Economic Consequences of Subsidizing Homeownership." *Region Focus* Fall (2008): 12-15. *The Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond*. 2008.  
<[www.RichmondFed.org/publications/regional\\_focus/2008/fall/pdf/cover\\_story.pdf](http://www.RichmondFed.org/publications/regional_focus/2008/fall/pdf/cover_story.pdf)>.

<sup>48</sup> Butkiewicz, James L. "Fixing the Housing Crisis." *Forbes.com*. Forbes Magazine, 30 Apr. 2009.  
<[www.forbes.com/2009/04/30/1930s-mortgage-reform-business-butkiewicz\\_print.html](http://www.forbes.com/2009/04/30/1930s-mortgage-reform-business-butkiewicz_print.html)>.

<sup>49</sup> Lusignan, Paul. "Public Housing in the US 1933-1949." *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*: E16-17.

<sup>50</sup> "HUD Historical Background." U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 18 May 2007. Web. 28 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguid/history.cfm>>.

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housing problems. Although the RFC received over 600 proposals for multi-family housing projects, only one project was financed (Knickerbocker Village in New York City, 1934).<sup>51</sup>

Public Works Administration (PWA): In the fall of 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) was elected President of the United States. In his First Inaugural Address, FDR proposed a new direction for the federal government which increased federal spending and created a myriad of new programs designed to rescue the country from the grip of the Great Depression. In June 1933, under the guidance of FDR, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Under Title II of the NIRA, the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA) was formed to fund public works projects with the mandate of putting Americans back to work. Allotted over \$3 billion, Title II enabled the PWA to fund low-cost housing and slum clearance through loans to limited-dividend corporations, grants to state or local agencies or through its own construction projects.<sup>52</sup>

Housing development funded by the PWA had three goals: job creation, construction of low-cost housing and slum clearance. In July 1933, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes established the Housing Division to administer the PWA's housing program and appointed himself administrator. The first housing projects undertaken by the PWA were executed by providing low-interest loans to limited dividend housing corporations. For limited-dividend developments, local architects were generally allowed to design the housing projects with little bureaucratic interference. The architects tended to adhere to the principles of the Garden City and European Modernist movements popular in Europe during the 1920s and the prototype American garden apartment complexes developed at Sunnyside and Radburn in the 1920s. PWA housing projects generally embraced the Garden City design characteristics including: "the use of superblocks to organize neighborhoods...and minimal ground coverage by buildings."<sup>53</sup>

The limited-dividend project applicants were required to provide 15 percent equity and were forced to limit rents and thus profits. Projects that met the PWA standards for construction and financing could receive federal loans up to 85 percent of the project cost at four percent interest over 30 years. Although the terms were inviting, only seven projects out of over 500 applications met PWA requirements and were funded.<sup>54</sup> The PWA limited-dividend program was suspended in February 1934.

Following the suspension of the limited-dividend program, the PWA Housing Division undertook an ambitious "Direct-Built" housing program in which low-rent housing was financed and constructed directly by the agency. The Direct-Built program was the brainchild of Ickes

<sup>51</sup> Lusignan E19.

<sup>52</sup> Lusignan E17-18.

<sup>53</sup> Lusignan E19.

<sup>54</sup> Lusignan E19, 23.



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who felt that "only the federal government could meet the nation's critical housing needs."<sup>55</sup> Between 1934 and 1937, when the PWA dissolved the Housing Division, 51 low-cost housing projects were constructed under the Direct-Built program and over 10,000 units of slum housing were cleared.

Under the Direct-Built program, the PWA established an office known as the Branch of Plans and Specifications to support local architects and engineers who were responsible for designing housing projects. In May 1935, the Branch of Plans and Specifications published *Unit Plans: Typical Room Arrangements, Site Plans and Details for Low Rent Housing* to direct local project teams. The PWA specifications embraced Garden City design principles and specifically addressed site planning. PWA housing projects were to be constructed at the lowest density possible, with low-rise buildings covering no greater than 30 percent of the site. The sites were to be superblocks with residential buildings located within large open spaces connected by pedestrian walkways. Residential buildings were to be constructed of high-quality materials and units were to be attached to maximize economy.<sup>56</sup>

Although the Housing Division was successful in its Direct-Built program, the program faced strong opposition from land owners and real estate developers who saw the program as a direct threat to property rights and the private housing industry. The program, and ultimately the Housing Division itself, was unable to efficiently accomplish its mandate of job creation, construction of low-cost housing and slum clearance and it was deemed that more jobs could be created and projects completed through alternative Works Progress Administration initiatives. In September 1935, funding for the Housing Division was suspended and no additional projects were approved.<sup>57</sup> In 1937, the United States Housing Act established the U.S. Housing Authority to succeed the Housing Division in financing housing for low-income tenants.<sup>58</sup>

National Housing Act of 1934: As part of FDR's New Deal legislation, the National Housing Act of 1934 was enacted to create jobs and stimulate the private housing sector. The Act aimed to "restore confidence in building by attracting private-sector investment through the insurance of loans and mortgages."<sup>59</sup> As previously described, prior to the Housing Act of 1934, mortgage terms for housing construction were severe and thus little housing was constructed utilizing financing. The lending of private credit was even furthered strained at the turn of the decade as banks continued to fail, and those still solvent were leery of lending.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Longstreth 160.

<sup>56</sup> Lusignan E25-26.

<sup>57</sup> Lusignan E35.

<sup>58</sup> Von Hoffman 302.

<sup>59</sup> Longstreth 161.

<sup>60</sup> "HUD Historical Background." 18 May 2007. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguides/history.cfm>>.

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The National Housing Act of 1934 was intended to remedy the failure of private institutions to provide mortgages by creating federal mortgage insurance programs. The programs specifically created by the Act were established under Title II, Sections 203 and 207, and enabled the federal government to provide mortgage insurance to private lending institutions. Section 203 provided insurance on mortgages for one to four family homes while Section 207 provided insurance for multifamily projects. The mortgage insurance programs were administered by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) which was established as part of the Housing Act of 1934. The Act also authorized the FHA to create a national home mortgage association which allowed for home mortgages to be sold on a secondary market.<sup>61</sup>

The Act authorized the Federal government to insure private lending institutions for up to 80 percent of a mortgaged property's value. Mortgages backed by the FHA were required to have a term of 20 years and interest rates were not to exceed 6 percent. Unlike the PWA Housing Division's Direct-Built program, the Housing Act of 1934 was explicitly enacted to "stimulate the building industry, to gain the confidence of private lenders...and to ensure a sound and solid foundation for private real estate investment."<sup>62</sup> In order to bolster the fact that the FHA was created to promote private enterprise, former Standard Oil senior vice-president James A. Moffett was appointed the FHA's administrator in June 1934. Moffett populated his staff and field offices with finance and real estate professionals and developed the FHA as the antithesis to Ickes' PWA Housing Division.<sup>63</sup> Initially, the FHA directed its efforts towards Section 203 projects, specifically modernization of existing single-family houses. Although this effort stimulated the building industry, little affect was had on the housing crisis.

### **FHA Rental Housing Division**

The Large-Scale Housing Division, later known as the Rental Housing Division (RHD), was established by the Federal Housing Administration in January 1935 to administer Section 207 of the National Housing Act of 1934 which enabled the agency to provide mortgage insurance to developers of multi-family housing. Section 207 mortgage insurance was available exclusively to limited-dividend corporations and provided private financial institutions with the assurance of repayment. The Section 207 program had two intended functions; creation of affordable, quality housing for low to medium income tenants and revival of the banking and building industries as

*Agency officials hoped that with the building industry crippled, a nearly guaranteed return of from five-to-six percent on a large-scale investment would*

<sup>61</sup> "HUD Historical Background." 18 May 2007. <<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/about/admguides/history.cfm>>.

<sup>62</sup> "Suburban Landscapes: The Federal Housing Administration's Principles for Neighborhood Planning and the Design of Small Houses." *National Register Publications*. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service National Register, History and Education, 21 Mar. 2001. Web. 29 Jan. 2010.

<[http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/01workshop/sub\\_landsc.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/01workshop/sub_landsc.htm)>.

<sup>63</sup> Longstreth 162.

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*make the program an attractive one to buildings and to mortgage bankers alike...The agency's (RHD) staff expressed the most interest in advancing housing projects that could offer monthly rental rates as low as \$7.50 per room.<sup>64</sup>*

With the establishment of the RHD the federal government recognized that the creation of affordable rental housing was a necessity, and the most viable solution to the country's housing crisis, as those facing the housing shortage epidemic generally were unable to afford their own home. By insuring private lenders and placing limits on the terms of the mortgages, the RHD enabled private developers to construct quality low and middle-income housing with the opportunity to profit. The program was seen as a private solution for a public problem, and was utilized to appease those who opposed the federal government's direct intervention into the housing market including many politicians, bankers, buildings and the leadership of the RHD itself.<sup>65</sup>

During its first six years of existence, Deputy Administrator of the FHA, Miles L. Colean, headed the Rental Housing Division. Colean, an architect from Peoria, Illinois who had worked for the prominent Chicago architectural firm Holabird & Roche, was integral in the drafting of the RHD's original policy and supervised the development of the program's project standards. Under Colean's auspices, the FHA Technical Division established "construction standards, cost estimating and subdivision and planning requirements for insured mortgage projects."<sup>66</sup>

Although Colean was an architect by trade, he was not experienced in the design of large-scale housing and constructed a design team at the RHD that was responsible for establishing the design principles that were to be utilized for approved housing projects. Colean named architect Eugene Henry Klaber, an expert in housing issues, as director of architecture for the RHD.<sup>67</sup> Klaber was a close friend of architect Clarence Stein, and the two had previously attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts and worked in the office of Bertram Goodhue. During the previous decade, Klaber along with Stein and landscape architect Henry Wright had been active in the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) which was the foremost authority on progressive housing design at the time and was responsible for the Garden City design of Sunnyside Gardens in Queens, New York and Radburn in New Jersey. Prior to joining the RHD, Klaber was chief of the technical staff for the PWA's Housing Division and was instrumental in forwarding the Garden Apartment typology as the preferred design for the Division's large-scale housing initiatives. A second Illinois architect, Chloethiel Woodard Smith, joined the RHD in 1935 as director of research and planning. Prior to joining the RHD, Smith had interned with

<sup>64</sup> Longstreth 164.

<sup>65</sup> Trieschmann, Laura V., Patti Kuhn, Megan Rispoli, and G. E. Jenkins. "Westover Historic District-VDHR No. 000-0032." *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. December 2005: Section 8, Page 129.

<sup>66</sup> Longstreth 166.

<sup>67</sup> Longstreth 166.

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RPAA member Henry Wright and had designed for the Housing Study Guild, which designed new ideas for housing and planned communities. While designing for the Guild, Smith interacted with RPAA members Clarence Stein and Lewis Mumford.<sup>68</sup>

The influences of the RPAA on the RHD design program is clearly evident based on the influence of Klaber and Smith and the early housing projects that were financed with Section 207 insured mortgages. The RHD's design standards were directly influenced by the garden apartment complexes located at Sunnyside and Chatham Village which were designed by RPAA members Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. Design principles utilized at these two developments including: "the arrangement of housing units to afford privacy, sunlight and fresh air; separation of internal pedestrian circulation from perimeter motor traffic; and provision of landscaped gardens and grounds away from the noise and activity of major arterial streets" were embraced by Division head Miles Colean through the support of subordinates Klaber and Smith.<sup>69</sup> The multi-family housing complexes approved by the RHD were required to have minimal site densities, low-rise construction (except in urban areas where elevators could be utilized) and landscaped open areas. These design principles became the foundation for RHD sponsored large-scale housing projects and in its first five years of existence, 228 of 291 approved Section 207 projects were of the garden apartment typology and "the RHD became the catalyst for a new form of garden apartment complex."<sup>70</sup>

Although successful in stimulating the private housing market, the Housing Act of 1934, as initially enacted, did not produce as much investment as was expected. In 1938 the Act was amended and Title II was rewritten to catalyze additional housing development. The 1938 amendments included more liberal terms for owner-occupied home mortgages (Section 203) and revision of Section 207 to include for-profit rental housing. The revised regulations proved to be the impetus for increased development in both owner-occupied and rental housing.<sup>71</sup>

With the onset of World War II in 1939, the United States economy transitioned to a war footing. Although not officially engaged in the war until the Pearl Harbor attack of December 7, 1941, the federal government had begun preparations for entrance into the war. The increase in defense production created an influx of workers relocating to America's manufacturing centers and an associated demand for housing. In March 1941, Title VI, Defense Housing Insurance, was amended to the Housing Act of 1934 and soon became the driving force in FHA mortgage insurance demand. In May 1942, Section 608 was added to Title VI "to stimulate the production of rental housing for war workers."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Longstreth 167.

<sup>69</sup> McClelland, Linda F., David L. Ames, and Sarah D. Pope. E24.

<sup>70</sup> Longstreth 164, 178.

<sup>71</sup> United States. Federal Housing Administration. *The FHA Story in Summary*. 1959: 14.

<sup>72</sup> *The FHA Story in Summary* 15.



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Following the end of the war in 1945, the FHA was faced with a housing shortage for veterans returning home. The Veterans' Emergency Housing Act of 1946 extended the FHA authority to insure mortgages under Title VI of the National Housing Act and the FHA focused its efforts "to encourage the production of veterans' housing, particularly rental housing."<sup>73</sup> Title VI proved to be extremely successful in producing rental housing for returning soldiers as the FHA liberalized minimum property and funding requirements to maximize the amount of housing produced.

**Development of Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens**

Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens were developed in three phases as FHA-sponsored affordable housing constructed between 1937 and 1942. Each of the three groupings assumes a unique building typology and each was designed to house a specific demographic. The housing complexes were constructed on land which was originally platted for use as single-family housing by the Dundalk Company. Prior to the construction of Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens, the sites were subdivided by the Dundalk Company and improved with roads and utilities. Prior to its improvement, the land was utilized for agriculture (Figure 7).

The initial development, Dundalk Gardens, was originally proposed in 1933 and was constructed by the Housing Company of Dundalk in 1937. Dundalk features clusters of four apartment units that were originally occupied by newlyweds with the husbands typically holding white collar jobs at the local industries. Liberty Gardens, which is composed of groupings of townhouses, was constructed by the Liberty Park Housing Corporation in 1940 and was originally occupied by families. Cornwall Gardens, which originally housed young men typically working blue collar jobs at the nearby industries, was constructed by Cornwall Manor Inc. in 1942 and are apartments with shared interior lobbies. The three interrelated development companies remained independent legal entities until 1947, but were marketed and operated as one complex by property manager John Snyder. In 1947, the three companies were legally merged and the entire garden apartment complex came under the ownership of the Dundalk Housing Corporation.

Dundalk Gardens

*Earlier Plans for the Site:* In Dundalk, the high-level of unemployment and demand for low-cost housing proved the catalyst for a proposed \$1,600,000 private housing project application to the PWA's Housing Division. Submitted in December 1933, the application proposed construction of 189 two-story brick apartment buildings with a total of 756 apartments. The apartments were to be rented for \$7.50 per room a month and were intended to provide housing for industrial workers. The project was seen as a means to provide constructive work for hundreds of laid-off

<sup>73</sup> *The FHA Story in Summary* 16.

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industrial workers including a significant portion of the estimated 1000 unemployed workers who resided in Dundalk.<sup>74</sup>

The project was to be located directly south of the Dundalk elementary school, at the present location of Dundalk Gardens, and was to be a marked departure from the historic development pattern of Dundalk, as the remainder of the community had been platted and developed for single-family detached housing. Although strongly supported by U.S. Congressman William Purington Cole, Jr. and the local business community, the housing project was never completed as the PWA's Limited-Dividend Housing program was suspended in February 1934.

Although the PWA Limited-Dividend Housing program was suspended in February 1934, the National Housing Act of 1934 was passed later in the year as a measure to stimulate job creation and the private housing sector. Under Section 207 of the National Housing Act of 1934 the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was empowered to insure private mortgages made to housing developers constructing multi-family housing. In May 1935, the first low-cost housing project in the Baltimore area to receive tentative FHA approval was proposed for the Dundalk Gardens site. The \$1,289,000 project was to include 122 buildings located on approximately 10-acres of land with a total of 432 apartments. The apartments were to be let for \$32 per month and were to be marketed towards small families. The garden apartment complex was designed by Washington architect E.P. Santmyer and was to include two-story colonial revival brick apartment houses located within a park-like landscape, with 70 percent of the site to be retained as courts and gardens. The project was required to meet FHA standards for landscaping and design as well as requirements regarding the proposed rents, corporate profits and financial viability. Funding for the project was to be provided by the New York Life Insurance Company and the development was to be undertaken by the Housing Company of Dundalk, a limited-dividend corporation.<sup>75</sup> Although it appeared certain that the FHA sponsored garden apartment complex would be constructed by the Housing Company of Dundalk, the highly touted project was never undertaken. While the reason for its failure is unclear, the project site was never purchased by the Housing Company of Dundalk and it appears likely that the FHA never provided final approval for the mortgage insurance.

*Construction of Dundalk Gardens:* Following two failed attempts at creating government sponsored low-cost rental housing in Dundalk, the third attempt proved successful. In the summer of 1937, an application was again submitted to the Large-Scale Housing Division of the FHA for a multi-unit residential garden apartment complex. The complex was to be located on a 12 acre site (Plat No.3: Blocks 4-6) bound by Liberty Parkway, Dunmanway, Dunran and Mornington streets (Figure 3). Said to be the "largest housing building operation of its kind to be

<sup>74</sup> "Housing Project at Dundalk Urged." *The Baltimore Sun*. 14 Dec. 1933: 22.

<sup>75</sup> "\$1,289,140 FHA Project O.K.'D for Dundalk." *The Baltimore Sun*. 31 May 1935: 20. / Ross, H.D.W. "The FHA Holds Promise for Baltimore." *The Baltimore Sun* 16 June 1935: MS9.

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started near Baltimore," the project was developed under the name Dundalk Gardens by the Housing Company of Dundalk, Inc., a limited-dividend corporation established in 1937 wholly unrelated to the concern of the same name established in 1935.<sup>76</sup> The corporation was established by Charles L. Stockhausen and Robert J. Gill of Baltimore and John W. Cross of Washington. Charles L. Stockhausen, a local builder, was appointed president of the corporation and Gustave W. Iser, the project architect, and Cornelius Beard, an FHA representative, were named as directors.<sup>77</sup> As stated in its corporate charter, the Housing Company of Dundalk, Inc. was established "to create a private limited dividend corporation to provide for low-cost housing and which may be regulated by the FHA as to rents, charges, capital structure, rate of return and method of operation."<sup>78</sup>

Designed by New York architect Gustave W. Iser, the Dundalk Gardens was to feature 68 two-story brick residences, each containing four apartments. The project was constructed by the New York firm Parklap-National Builders, Inc. on land that had been owned and platted by the Dundalk Company and was previously improved with paved streets, utility services and landscaping. As specified by FHA requirements that were embraced by Iser, the development was to have less than 30 percent building coverage with the remainder of the site utilized for courts and gardens (Figure 4). The residences were to be constructed of red brick utilizing a modern, simplified Colonial Revival aesthetic. Each apartment was to be provided with modern utility services and appliances and was to be fully furnished by the locally prominent Hecht Brothers Department store.<sup>79</sup>

Similar to the failed development of 1935, Dundalk Gardens was to be funded utilizing an FHA sponsored private mortgage and thus was required to meet the financial requirements of the FHA Large-Scale Housing Division. The project's first mortgage was taken by the RFC Mortgage Company with a value of \$800,000 and a term of five years.<sup>80</sup> Whereas the initial PWA sponsored proposal for low-income industrial worker's housing in 1933 proposed that the apartments would be let at a monthly rate of \$7.50 to \$7.67 per room, and the 1935 FHA sponsored project was to have monthly room rates of \$10.59, the FHA's requirements for short-term mortgages and a minimum debt coverage ratio meant that the affordable rental rates originally proposed could not produce enough income to make the project financially viable. In order to receive its FHA sponsored mortgage, the Housing Company of Dundalk was required to set monthly rents at \$12 per room; at a level "calculated to yield the owners a fair share on their investment and yet be as low as is practical."<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup> "Photo Standalone 14 - No Title." *The Baltimore Sun*. 28 Nov. 1937: SA20.

<sup>77</sup> "Dundalk Housing Plans Completed." *The Baltimore Sun*. 1 July 1937: 14.

<sup>78</sup> "Dundalk Housing Plans Completed." *The Baltimore Sun*. 1 July 1937: 14.

<sup>79</sup> "Today See Dundalk's Garden Apartments." *The Baltimore Sun*. 24 Apr. 1938: 18.

<sup>80</sup> Watmough, W.N. "Real Estate - Dundalk Project Near Completion." *The Baltimore Sun*. 28 Nov. 1937: SA20.

<sup>81</sup> "Dundalk Project Promises Success." *The Baltimore Sun*. 6 Feb. 1938: 3.

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Although originally intended for local industrial workers, Dundalk Gardens was not entirely effective in providing affordable rental housing due to the financial requirements of the FHA. When first tenanted in the fall of 1937, the majority of tenants were young couples who were enabled to "move out of congested city areas into a suburban development, where they have plenty of light and air, broad lawns and park-line surroundings and convenient modern homes."<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the project created high quality housing that was affordable to those who could not afford to purchase single-family homes, but the average rent of \$41.25 per month was beyond the means of many workers who toiled at the nearby industries.

Liberty Gardens

As Dundalk Gardens neared completion, the Housing Company of Dundalk, Inc. evaluated the option of developing additional multi-family housing on vacant property located directly to the east of the Dundalk Elementary School property. At the time, the developer indicated that additional construction would be undertaken should business conditions remain favorable.<sup>83</sup> Following the completion of Dundalk Gardens, the Liberty Park Housing Corporation was incorporated to develop multi-family housing on the two parcels of land, Plat No.4-A: Lots A and B, bordered by: Shipway Road to the north, Yorkway Road to the east, Dunmanway to the south and Liberty Parkway to the west (Figure 5). Lot A, which occupied the west half of the property fronting Liberty Parkway, composed the initial development.

Liberty Gardens, known as Liberty Park at the time of construction, was designed by Dundalk Gardens' architect Gustave W. Iser. The development was to include two-story brick housing units of similar design to those constructed at Dundalk Gardens. Unlike the previous development, Liberty Gardens was to be constructed as 136 paired two-story townhouses which were designed to accommodate larger families.<sup>84</sup> The development featured a multitude of interconnected courts and gardens with a minimal amount of building coverage (Figure 6). As with Dundalk Gardens, an FHA sponsored mortgage was utilized and thus the project was required to meet the design and financial requirements of the Large-Scale Housing Division.<sup>85</sup> When completed in October 1940, Liberty Gardens offered renters fully furnished, three to five room town homes with ample space for their families.<sup>86</sup>

Cornwall Gardens

<sup>82</sup> "Dundalk Project Promises Success." *The Baltimore Sun*. 6 Feb. 1938: 3.

<sup>83</sup> Watmough, W.N. "Real Estate - Dundalk Project Near Completion." *The Baltimore Sun*. 28 Nov. 1937: SA20.

<sup>84</sup> "Big Maryland Project: Garden Group Near Baltimore to Cost \$575,000." *The New York Times*. 26 May 1940.

<sup>85</sup> "Federal Housing Project has a Flagpole Dispute." *The Baltimore Sun*. 1 Dec. 1924: 6.

<sup>86</sup> Liberty Gardens. Advertisement. *The Baltimore Sun* 28. July 1940: S14.



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In 1942, the land parcel located directly east of Liberty Gardens, Plat No.4-A: Lot B, was conveyed from the Dundalk Company to Cornwall Manor Inc (Figure 5). Cornwall Gardens was developed as a garden apartment complex that featured a site plan that was nearly identical to Liberty Gardens. Unlike the previous two phases, Cornwall Gardens was constructed as a series of attached apartment houses with single entrances that provided interior access to the housing units. Although not specifically attributed to Gustave W. Iser, the development embraced the site plan and architectural elements utilized at Dundalk and Liberty Gardens. Although little documentation exists regarding Cornwall Gardens, it appears that the development was sponsored by the FHA Large-Scale Housing Division and undertaken by a limited-dividend corporation that was directly related to the Housing Company of Dundalk and Liberty Park Housing Corporation. Constructed during the war, Cornwall Gardens was designed to provide housing for workers who were engaged in the war effort at the nearby industries. Thus, the residents of Cornwall, by and large, were employed in blue collar positions in the Dundalk factories.

**Design Features of Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens**

Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens were constructed as garden apartment complexes which generally adhered to the design principles established by Stein and Wright at Sunnyside and Chatham Village and later adopted by the Rental Housing Division. In the employ of Clarence Stein as Sunnyside was designed and developed, project architect Gustave W. Iser was keenly aware of the advancements in the design of multi-unit housing complexes during the 1920s and most certainly contributed to Stein's designs as his lead draftsman. The garden apartment design principles established by Stein and Wright are clearly evident within the subject apartment complex. Although the developments have well defined site plans, there is no evidence that a landscape architect was engaged for these projects.

Paramount to the garden apartment typology is a site plan emphasizing minimal land coverage and maximization of landscape. The subject complex differs from most early garden apartment developments as it was constructed within a pre-established site that had already been improved with roads and sidewalks. The existing infrastructure limited Iser's ability to create superblocks as Stein intended and forced each complex to be designed as multiple miniature garden apartment complexes due to the existing street grid. Although the existing site constraints were not ideal, Iser developed three site plans which limited land coverage to 22 percent which was well within the RHD's recommendation of 30 percent.<sup>87</sup> The housing units were located at a relatively close distance to the adjacent streets which allowed for the creation of inner landscaped

<sup>87</sup> "Liberty Park Project at Dundalk, MD." Pencil Points 21 (1940): 571.

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courtyards which were intended to be the focus of the developments. Within the courtyard of each development, the buildings were interconnected with sidewalks and the remainder of the open area was landscaped and utilized for recreation. The sites were each developed with integrated automobile garages which were located at the periphery and enabled the segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The buildings within each of the three garden apartment complexes match the design aesthetics typical of RHD sponsored housing developments constructed during the mid-1930s. Although each complex has a differing set of floor plans including: clustered apartments with exterior entrances, apartments with shared interior entrance lobbies, and townhouses, each closely matches the designed aesthetic established by Stein and Wright at Sunnyside. The housing units consist of 2-story brick buildings that are set at right angles to maximize natural light and ventilation and to create protected and safe interior courtyards. The housing units were constructed with a utilitarian, simplified Colonial Revival design with ornamental features limited to wood door surrounds and a limited number of slate hipped roofs. While the housing units generally have a utilitarian appearance, the construction materials, interior floor plans and amenities were of a high quality and are generally extant.

**Project Architect: Gustave W. Iser**

Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens' architectural lineage can be traced to the origins of the American garden apartment concept and the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) which was established in 1923 by architects Clarence Stein and Henry Wright. From 1925-1931 Gustave W. Iser, the architect for Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens, "was associated with Clarence Stein, the noted planner, as the chief draftsman in the firm of Robert D. Kohn, Clarence Stein and Charles Butler."<sup>88</sup> Iser was thus well aware of the Garden City movement and of the prototype garden apartment complexes at Sunnyside and Chatham Village. Between 1927 and 1932, Iser was employed by Goodhue Associates. In 1933, Iser established his own firm in New York City, and in 1933, submitted a proposal for a garden apartment complex at the Chrystie-Forsyth corridor on the Lower East Side of Manhattan (Figure 8). Although unbuilt, the proposal illustrated Iser's grasp of the garden apartment aesthetic as it featured low-rise building clusters interconnected with public gardens and walkways.<sup>89</sup> Iser incorporated the Garden City principles acquired under the tutelage of Clarence Stein into the design of the garden apartment complexes at Dundalk, Liberty and Cornwall Gardens.

**Conclusion**

<sup>88</sup> "Gustave W. Iser, 83; Architect Was Noted For Housing Projects." *The New York Times* 30 Oct. 1979.

<sup>89</sup> Plunz, Richard. *A History of Housing in New York City*. New York, NY: Columbia UP, 1990: 190.

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Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens is locally significant as a response to Dundalk's affordable housing shortage in the early 1930s that was created by the influx of workers attracted to the area's growing manufacturing base and available jobs during the Great Depression. Although local manufacturing concerns declined at the onset of the Great Depression, by the mid 1930s the industries had rebounded and were growing. Unlike other federal housing initiatives of the period which were focused on slum clearance, and created demand through the removal of existing supply, Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens was constructed in response to actual population growth in the community. While Dundalk had previously been developed as single-family owned housing, Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens was constructed to meet local demand for quality affordable rental housing in the wake of the Great Depression. The garden apartment development was also the first large-scale housing project in Dundalk to utilize the Federal government's New Deal era housing finance programs geared toward the creation of affordable multi-unit housing for local industrial workers.

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**Geographical Data**

**Additional UTM References**

5. 18      0369217   4346248  
Zone      Easting   Northing

6. 18      0368960   4346292  
Zone      Easting   Northing

7. 18      0369217   4346248  
Zone      Easting   Northing

8. 18      0369126   4346498  
Zone      Easting   Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at a point at the southeast corner of the intersection of Liberty Parkway and Shipway, proceed northeast 623' along the south curblineline of Shipway to the southwest corner of the intersection of Shipway and Yorkway. Then proceed south 980' along the west curblineline of Yorkway to the northwest corner of the intersection of Yorkway and Dunmanway. Then proceed southwest 623' along the north curblineline of Dunmanway to the northeast corner of the intersection of Dunmanway and Liberty Parkway. Then proceed southwest to the southwest corner of the intersection of Dunmanway and Liberty Parkway and proceed south 518' along the west curblineline of Liberty Parkway to the northwest corner of the intersection of Liberty Parkway and Mornington Road. Then proceed 872' northwest along the north curblineline of Mornington Road to the northeast corner of the intersection of Mornington Road and Dunran Road. Proceed 440' north along the east curblineline of Dunran Road to the southeast corner of Dunran Road and Dunmanway. Proceed 715' northeast along the south curblineline of Dunmanway to the southwest corner of Dunmanway and Liberty Parkway. Proceed northeast to the northeast corner of the intersection of Dunmanway and Liberty Parkway and then proceed north 980' along the east curblineline of Liberty Parkway and return to the point of origin.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the interrelated Dundalk Gardens, Liberty Gardens and Cornwall Gardens garden apartment complexes.



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**PHOTOGRAPH LIST**

Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens  
Baltimore County, MD  
Nick Kraus  
Heritage Consulting Group, January 2010

Digital Photographs  
Photo Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 4800  
Photo Paper: Epson Premium Glossy Paper  
Ink: Epson Ultra Chrome K3

Filenames on enclosed disk as follows:  
MD\_BaltimoreCounty\_Dundalk,Liberty,CornwallGardens\_0001.tif, \_0002.tif, . . . 0010.tif, etc.

Photo #	View
1	Dundalk Gardens, Looking Southwest
2	Dundalk Gardens, Dunmurry Road, Looking North
3	Dundalk Gardens, Dunbrin Road, Looking South
4	Dundalk Gardens, Southeast Corner, Looking Northwest
5	Dundalk Gardens, Rear Courtyard, Looking South
6	Dundalk Gardens, Living Room, Looking South
7	Dundalk Gardens, Living Room, Looking Northwest
8	Dundalk Gardens, Bathroom, Looking West
9	Dundalk Gardens, Kitchen, Looking East
10	Liberty Gardens, West Courtyard, Looking East
11	Liberty Gardens, South Elevation, Looking North
12	Liberty Gardens, West Elevation, Looking Southeast
13	Liberty Gardens, Detail of Townhouse Entrance
14	Liberty Gardens, Looking South at Rear Garages
15	Liberty Gardens, Living Room, Looking East
16	Liberty Gardens, Living Room, Bedroom, Looking South
17	Liberty Gardens, Bathroom, Looking West
18	Liberty Gardens, Kitchen, Looking South
19	Cornwall Gardens, Dunwall Court, Looking West
20	Cornwall Gardens, Dunbrook Court, Looking Northwest
21	Cornwall Gardens, East Elevation, Looking Northwest
22	Cornwall Gardens, Rear Courtyard, Looking East
23	Cornwall Gardens, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor, Lobby, Looking North
24	Cornwall Gardens, Living Room, Looking Northeast
25	Cornwall Gardens, Bedroom, Looking East

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- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 26 | Cornwall Gardens, Bathroom, Looking East |
| 27 | Cornwall Gardens, Kitchen, Looking South |

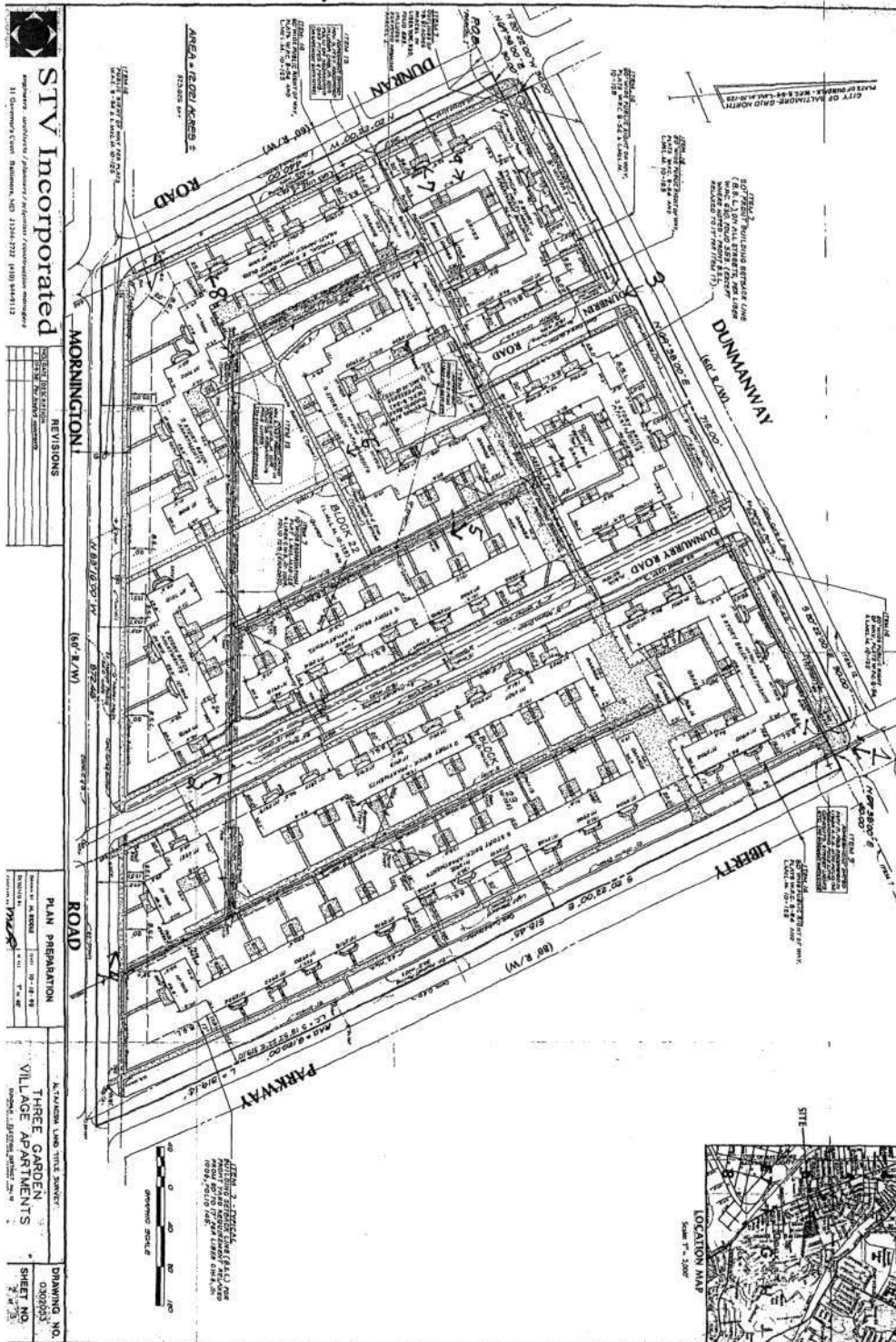
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Section number Photo Key Plan 1 Page 37

Dundalk Gardens Photo Key Plan



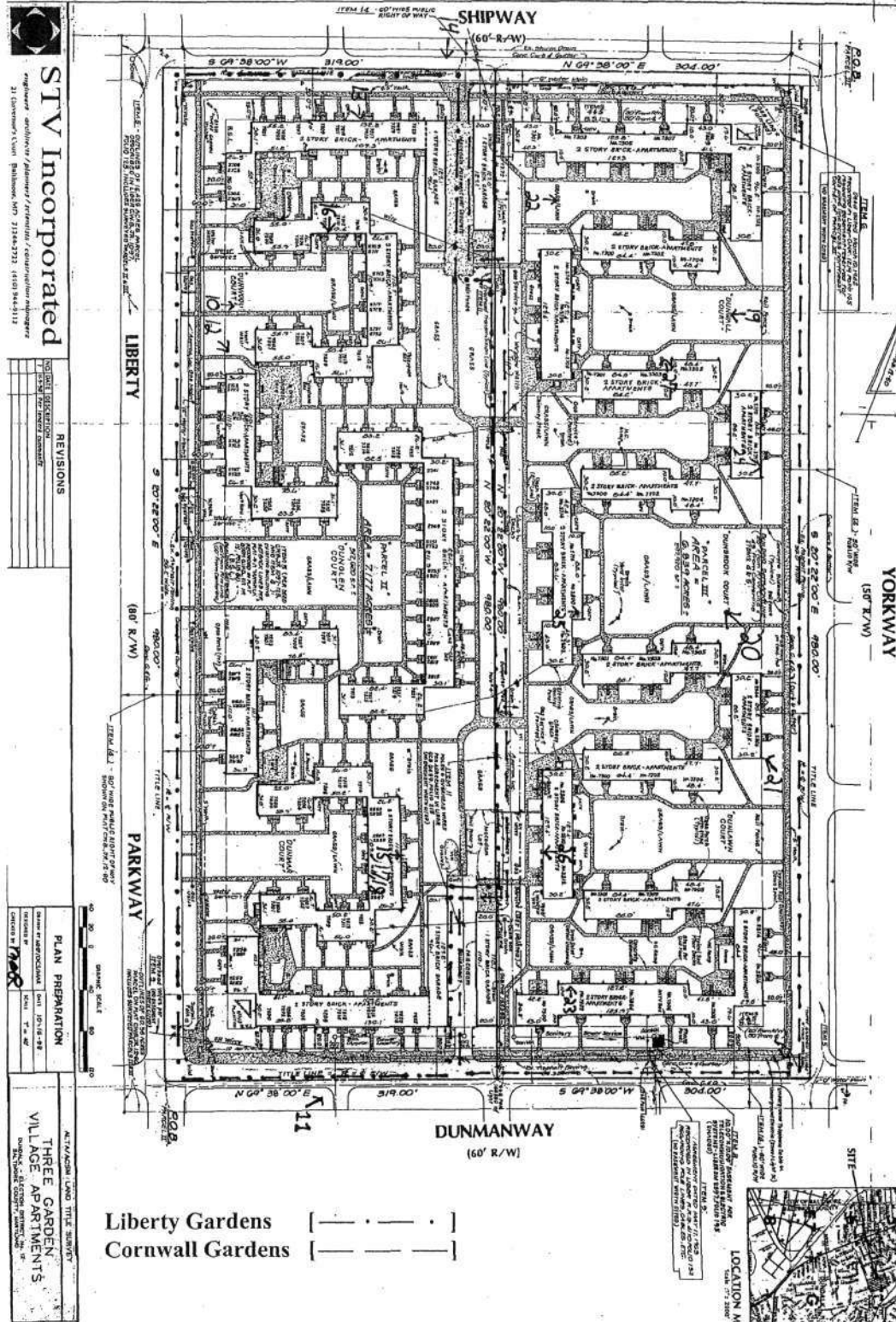
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Liberty and Cornwall Gardens Photo Key Plan





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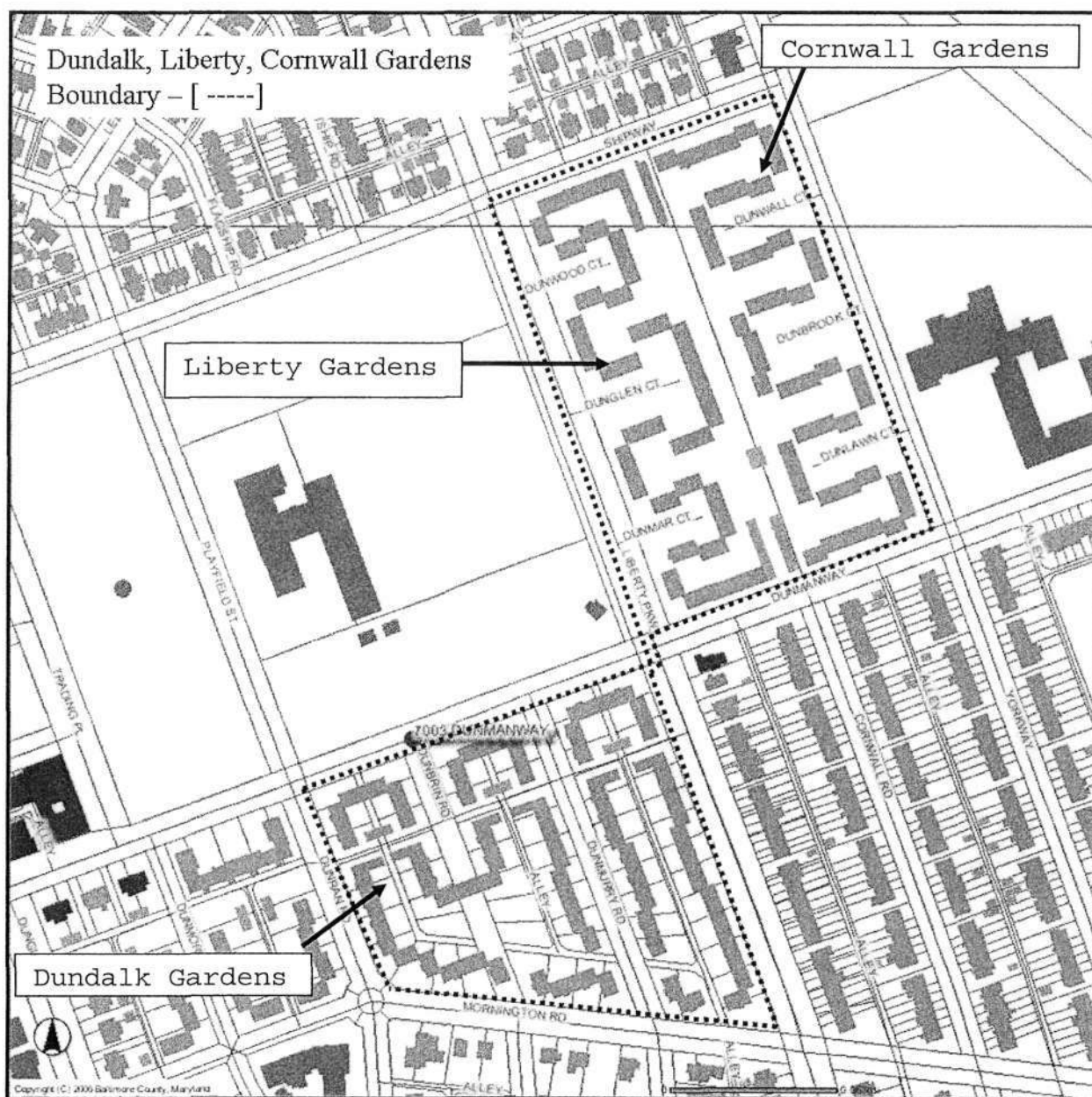
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Section number Site Plan Page 40

## Site Plan



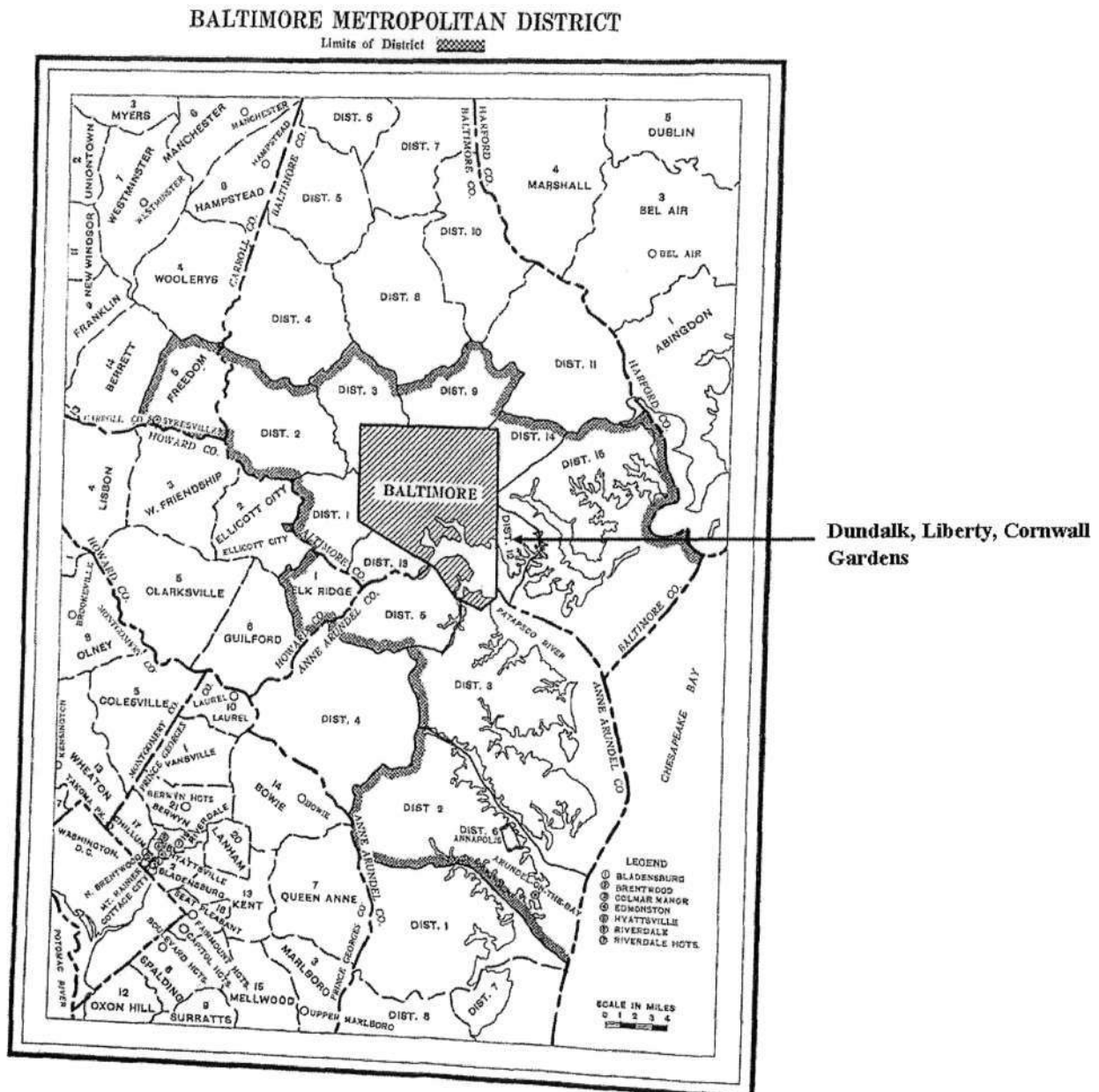
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Section number Figure 1 Page 41

Fifteenth Census of the United States (1930)



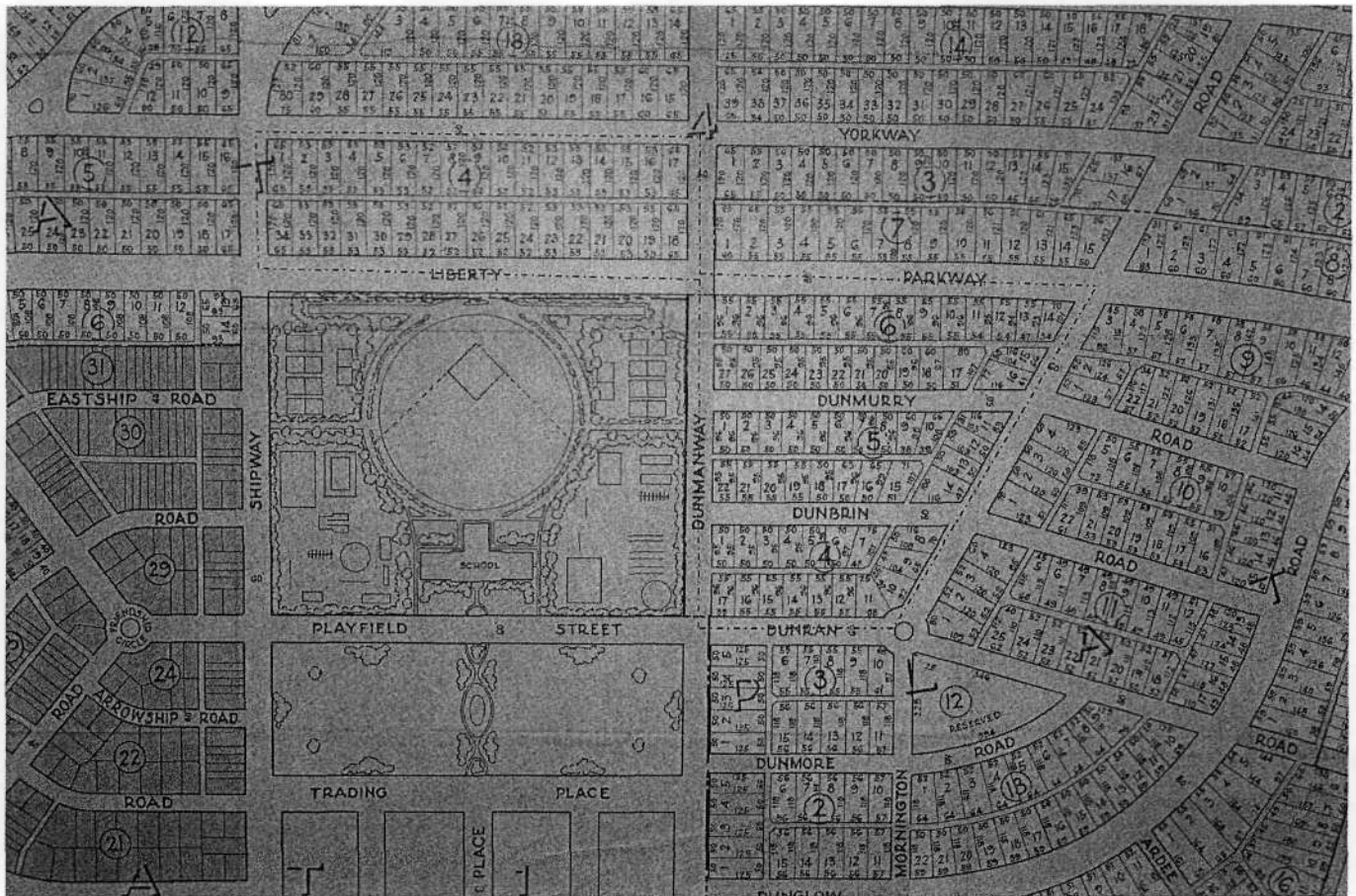
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Section number Figure 2 Page 42

Dundalk Plat Map, 1928  
The Roland Park Company Engineering Department  
Commissioned by the Dundalk Company



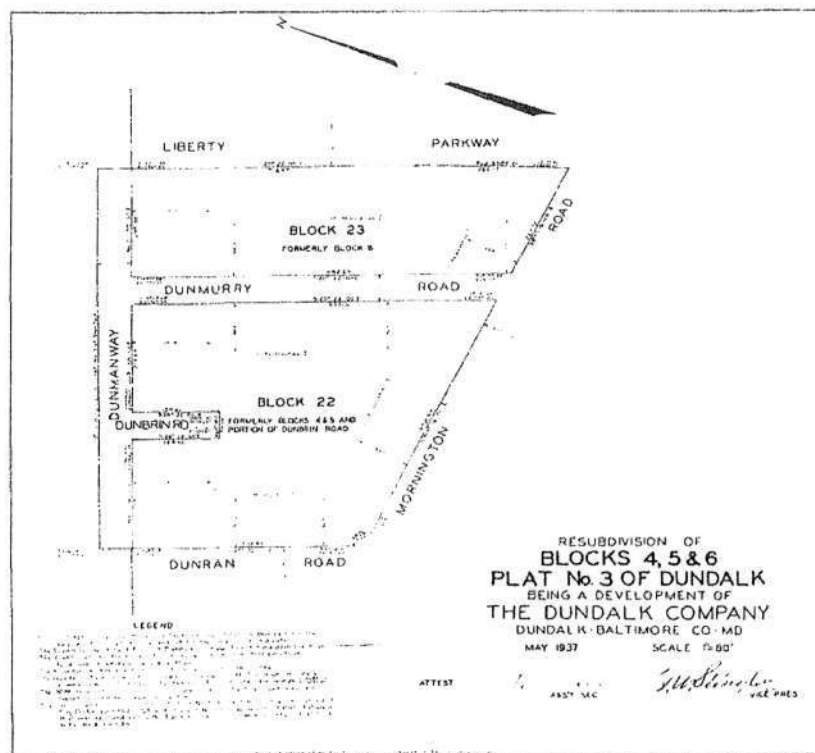
Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens Boundary - [- · - · -]



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Dundalk Gardens Site  
Plat Map No.3: Blocks 4-6  
The Dundalk Company, May 1937



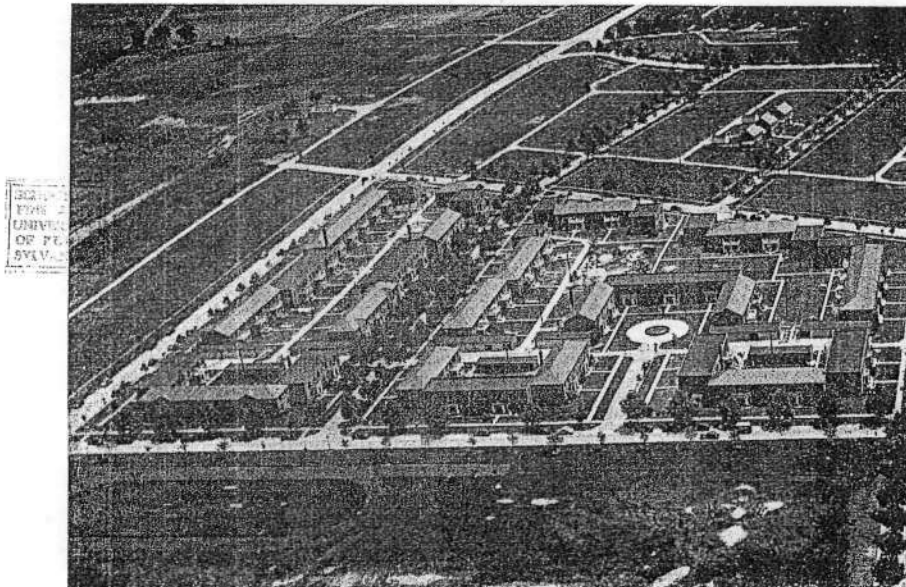
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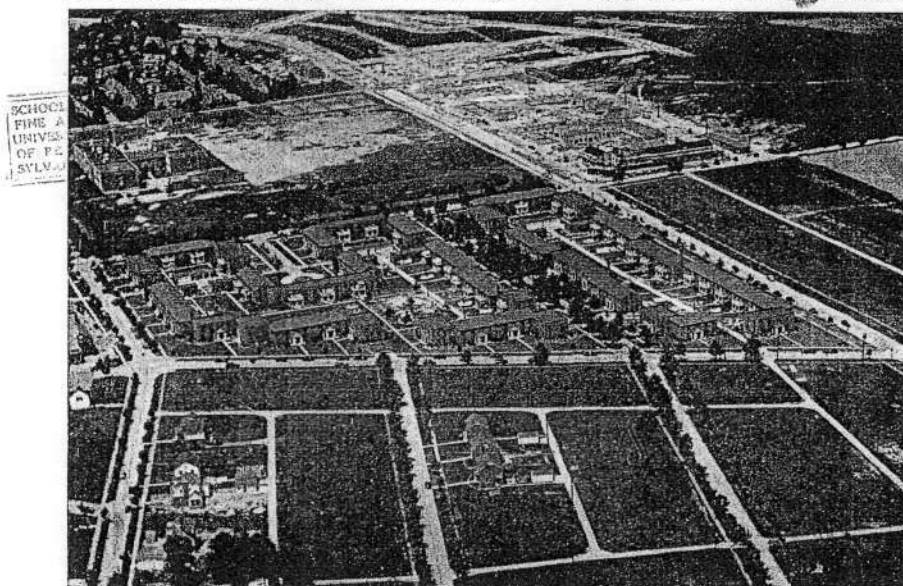
National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number Figure 4 Page 44

Dundalk Gardens  
1940 Aerial Photographs  
Pencil Points Journal, September 1940: 568



THE FIRST UNIT OF THE DUNDALK PROJECT DESIGNED BY GUSTAVE W. ISER, NEW YORK ARCHITECT, IS SEEN ABOVE FROM THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL GROUNDS. A COMFORTABLE RESIDENTIAL SCALE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BY AVOIDING LONG, UNBROKEN FACADES AND BY A PLEASING DISPOSITION OF THE BUILDINGS AND PLANTED AREAS. THE VIEW BELOW IS ACROSS THE EXISTING UNIT, LOOKING TOWARD THE SCHOOL GROUNDS AND THE SITE OF THE SECOND UNIT WHERE CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN STARTED. THE STREET FRONTS OF THE BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN KEPT RATHER FORMAL, BUT PRIVATE PORCHES HAVE BEEN PROVIDED FOR ALL THE DUPLEX UNITS ON THE SHELTERED SIDE OVERLOOKING THE INDIVIDUAL GARDENS



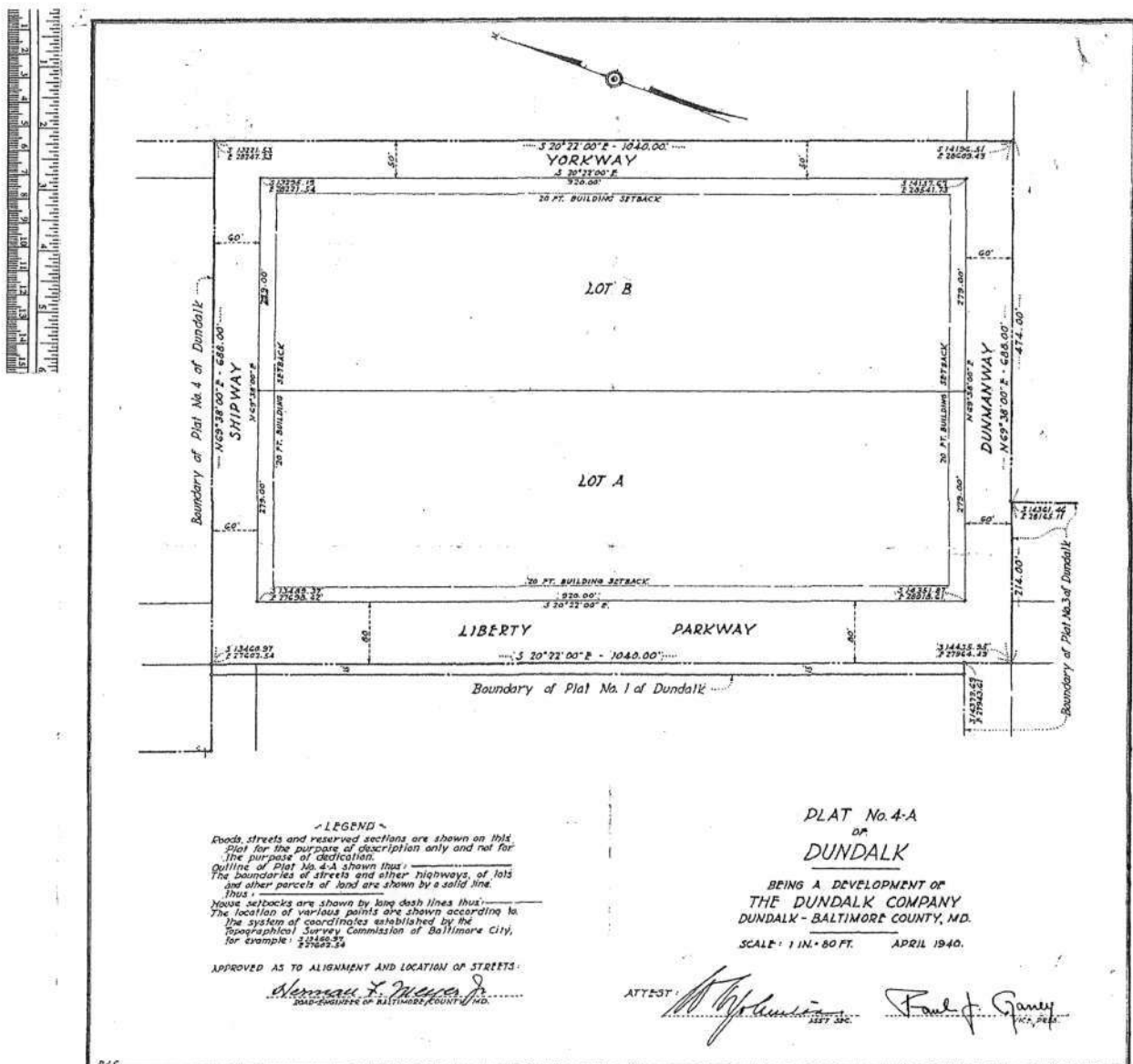
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Figure 5 Page 45

Liberty and Cornwall Gardens Site  
1940 Plat Map No.4-A: Lots A and B  
The Dundalk Company



MSA CSQ 2136 2173

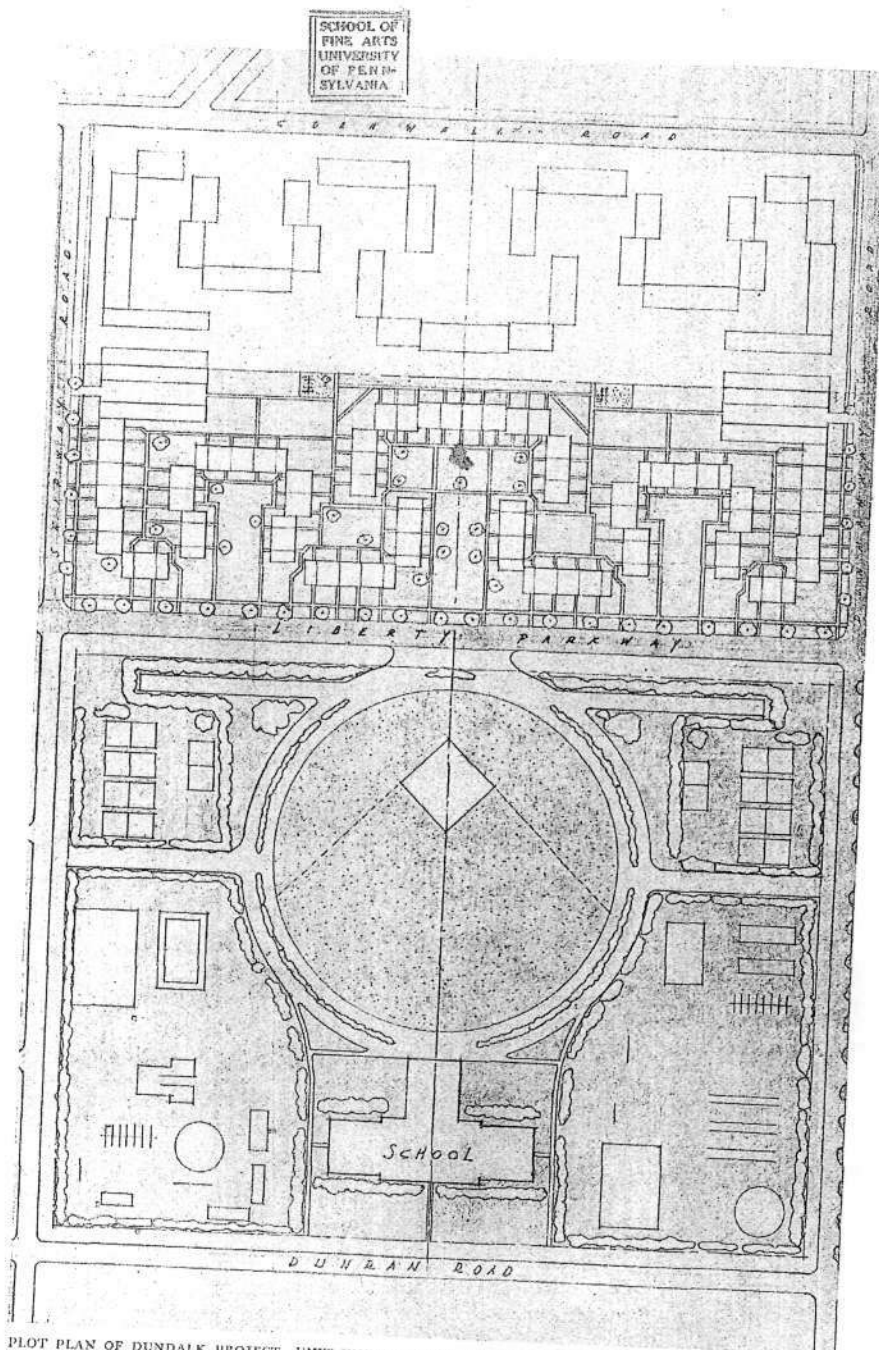
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Section number Figure 6 Page 46

Liberty and Cornwall Gardens  
Proposed Site Plan  
Pencil Points Journal, September 1940: 570



PLOT PLAN OF DUNDALK PROJECT—UNIT UNDER CONSTRUCTION, "LIBERTY PARK," JUST ABOVE CENTER OF PAGE. NOTE THAT IT WILL BE DUPLICATED ULTIMATELY ON OTHER HALF OF THE BLOCK (AT TOP)

570

PENCIL POINTS



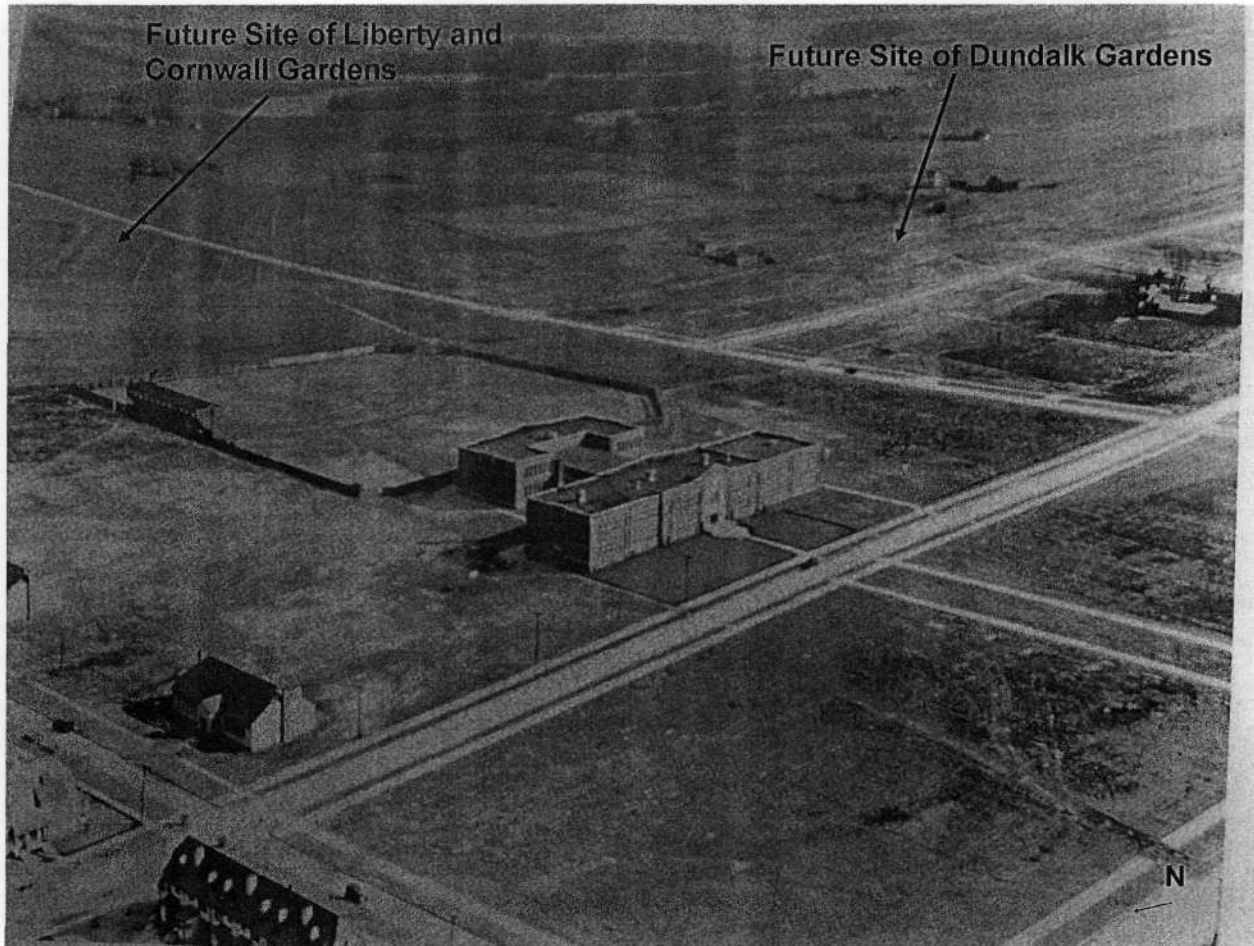
**United States Department of the Interior**  
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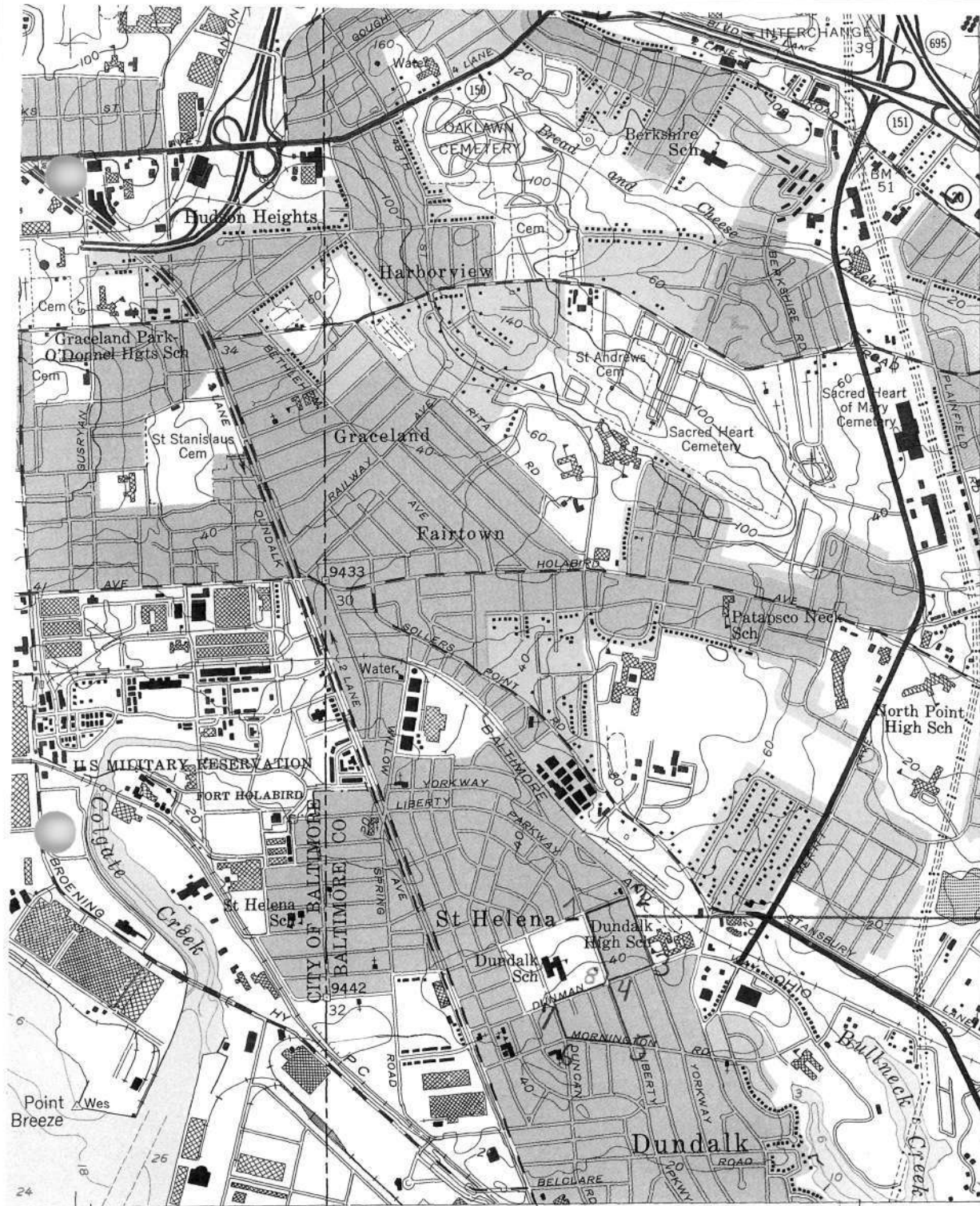
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**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Dundalk, Liberty, Cornwall Gardens Site  
Aerial Photograph  
C. 1930





17°30"  
NORTH POINT 1.3 MI.  
SPARROWS POINT 4.3 MI.

4348

INVERNESS 1 MI.

4347

BA-3266  
Dundalk Liberty, Cornwall  
Gardens  
Dundalk, Baltimore County, MT

VTM References:

1. 18/0369038/4346776
2. 18/0369210/4346841
3. 18/0369304/4346569
4. 18/0369132/4346501
5. 18/0369217/4346248
6. 18/0368960/4346292
7. 18/0368914/4346419
8. 18/0369126/4346498

39°15'

76°30'

32°30"

368000m E.

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1976

SPARROWS POINT 3.4 MI.

# ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Heavy-duty       | Light-duty      |
| Medium-duty      | Unimproved dirt |
| Interstate Route | U. S. Route     |
|                  | State Route     |

(SPARROWS POINT)  
5762 III NW



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

## BALTIMORE EAST, MD.

SE/4 BALTIMORE 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3915—W7630/7.5

1953

PHOTOREVISED 1966 AND 1974

AMS 5662 I SE—SERIES V833





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Baltimore County, MD  
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